
XBOX
Official Xbox Ma
DEAD OR ALIVE ONLINE
ONLY ON XBOX
HOT NEW screens of this Live stunner
Tom Clancy's SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW
UNBELIEVABLE new gameplay details & screens
ULTIMATE XBOX GIFT GUIDE
You MUST have everything on this list!
EVERY SECRET REVEALED!
grand theft auto III
Maps to all 100 hidden packages
Learn to fly the Dodo
Reveal the hidden tank
Get every car in the game
&
grand theft auto Vice city
FIRST EVER XBOX CODES INSIDE!
Hundreds of hidden secrets revealed
New and cruel uses for weapons
Exploit glitches for newfound fun
The fastest way to get the Apache Helicopter
OVER 20 PAGES OF REVIEWS!
Grand Theft Auto Double Pack
Project Gotham Racing 2
Armed and Dangerous
XIII
Dead Man's Hand
WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW
Deus Ex INVISIBLE WAR
The best RPG this year?
future games
$9.99US $12.99CAN
Holiday 03 / Issue #26



CAPTION: Surely our cover peeps have something on their minds. Send captions and quips to xboxmag@futurenetworkusa.com.

Only on Xbox

All Access

Features

Previews

Reviews

Extended Play

On the Disc

I LOVE YOU, TOMORROW…



SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW Pg. 58
Sam Fisher's back and he's gadgetier than ever! Wait, is "gadgetier" a word?

M-M-O-SO-GOOD



TRUE FANTASY LIVE ONLINE Pg. 70
The Xbox's first true massively multiplayer RPG looks incredible. The wait for this one's gonna hurt.

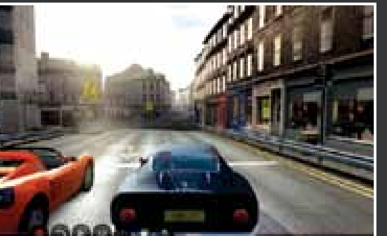
REVIEWS! WHAT WE SAY ABOUT…



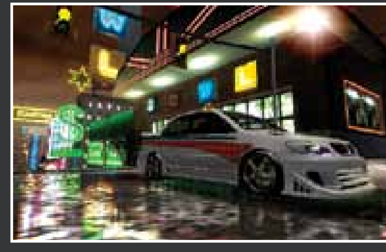
DEUS EX: INVISIBLE WAR Pg. 72
Roleplay your way, only on Xbox. World exclusive review!



GRAND THEFT AUTO DOUBLE PACK Pg. 96
They're heeeeerreeee! Do you even have to ask if you should buy them?



PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2 Pg. 82
Is it possible to have *too much* to do in a game? Nah…



NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND Pg. 108
Should this racer drift into your Xbox? We share our thoughts…

■ **MISS OUR SPREAD?:** For the first time, the TOC is not a spread. We decided to do two singles so we could do more spreads later in the book. Do you mind? Email xboxmag@futurenetworkusa.com.

Wishy McWishington



The Live difference

Xbox Live really will change the way you play games

All the supposed visionaries in this industry have been telling us for years that online gaming is the future. That it'll change the way we play games, the way we buy games, and the way we make games. While I believe the prophecies to be right on the money, I just haven't seen anything in the online space that pointed to this prediction coming true anytime soon. Most of the online games (while tons of fun) have just been smarter versions of the online games we've been playing on the PC for years.

Ever since it launched, Xbox Live has been a huge hit and a great arena for gaming, but the games have been pretty standard fare... brilliant, and a blast to play, but nothing world-changing... until now. We're finally starting to see how online gaming can actually change how we play games. True second-generation Xbox Live titles like *Project Gotham Racing 2* are pushing the system to new heights realizing a potential that none of us likely imagined.

I know when I dreamed of the future of Xbox Live I never thought how it could affect the single-player game. That's exactly what *PGR2* does, it completely changes the nature of the single-player game with an "always Live" functionality that constantly ranks you against the world. The end result is a type of depth and experience that is completely new to videogames.

It was cool hearing about Live 2.0 and the new features, but when they show up in a game is when you truly realize its vast potential.

So what's next? At this point it's impossible to say what the next major advancement in online gaming will be, but I'll bet you money that it'll be on Xbox and I'll give you odds that *Halo 2* will be the game that brings it home. I can't wait.

Meet The Team

The drawings were so vice that we had to use them twice

Mike Salmon — *editor in chief*

Holiday Wishlist:
10. Remote control refrigerator/big screen TV
9. Peace on earth... or at least peace in Sunnyvale
8. *Halo 1.5*
7. Bay Area real estate crash
6. For people to finally get behind Malentine's Day
5. The Space-Jeep
4. The Vikings in the Super Bowl
3. The Vikings to not lose the Super Bowl... again
2. 12 more hours a day to fit in my *PGR2* addiction
1. Whatever my daughter Ava wants

msalmon@futurenetworkusa.com

Frank O'Connor — *executive editor*

Holiday Wishlist:
1. Salma Hayek
2. *Halo 2*
3. Big Screen Plasma
4. A nice new car
5. Mac G5
6. World Peace
7. World Peace 2: The Revengenating
8. An Apple iPod from the future that plays video and works as a PDA
9. One of those gross bald Egyptian cats that freak people out with the wrinkles
10. A cat wig collection

foconnor@futurenetworkusa.com

Sarah Ellerman — *managing editor*

Holiday Wishlist:
1. Eight days in Kauai
2. A beautiful li'l iPod
3. A shiny new *AP Stylebook and Libel Manual*
4. A copy of Xbox Music Mixer
5. Any fashion accessory with grommets
6. A car with an electronic stabilization system and a sunroof
7. A Cuisinart
8. Modern fiction
9. Interesting Japanese candies
10. Xanax, lots and lots of Xanax

sellerman@futurenetworkusa.com

Francesca Reyes — *senior editor*

Holiday Wishlist:
10. A Civic hybrid
9. A house in Hawaii
8. An MBA in English Lit and Creative Writing
7. *True Fantasy Live Online*
6. Every Urusei Yatsura and Futurama on DVD
5. Xbox 2, PS3, and GameCube 2
4. Sequels to *Lunar*, *Suikoden*, *Shining Force*, and *Phantasy Star*
3. An extra five hours in the day
2. *Halo 2*
1. Peace on earth and good will to (most) men

freyes@futurenetworkusa.com

Holden Hume — *art director*

Holiday Wishlist:
1. A trip to NYC
2. A trip to Greece
3. A trip to Scandinavia
4. A trip to France
5. A trip to Mars
6. A trip to the Galapagos islands
7. A trip to Whistler, British Columbia
8. A trip to Baja California (Mexico)
9. A nice new doggie carrier
10. Some sleeping pills

hhume@futurenetworkusa.com

Juliann Brown — *associate art director*

Holiday Wishlist:
1. All my stolen CDs back
2. My broken Xbox fixed
3. A motorcycle helmet that fits my giant head
4. A lifetime supply of Cabernet
5. A lifetime supply of parrot food
6. A small island
7. A mansion on a hill on the coast (with a heated pool, please)
8. My mother to stop being such a control freak
9. Enough cash to buy better-than-Ikea furniture
10. A cleaning lady that comes twice a week

jbrown@futurenetworkusa.com

Dave Rees — *disc editor*

Holiday Wishlist:
10. A lifetime supply of Tropical Monkeys
9. Two 42" plasma HDTVs
8. To finally finish *KOTOR*
7. A private jet
6. Pop music to be good again
5. *Ninja Gaiden*
4. A real email spam blocker
3. A loaded Mac G5
2 More time
1. A playable demo of every Xbox game before the game ships

drees@futurenetworkusa.com

Ryan McCaffrey — *assistant editor*

Holiday Wishlist:
1. The hope of owning a home in the Bay Area
2. A blue Infiniti G35
3. *Halo 2* – now!
4. Every season of "Kids in the Hall" on DVD
5. For the D-backs to sign Vladimir Guererro
6. To vacation in Hawaii so I'm no longer the only staff member who hasn't
7. A working progressive scan DVD player
8. A trustworthy DeLorean mechanic
9. *True Fantasy Live Online* – now!
10. Good health for everyone on the staff

rmccaffrey@futurenetworkusa.com

Chris Thompson — *editorial intern*

Holiday Wishlist:
10. My own mountain
9. *Halo 2*
8. Heli-boarding in Alaska
7. *Fable*
6. BIG 12 CHAMPIONSHIP = CU - 72 OU - 0
5. No NHL lockout
4. "South Park" Season 3 DVD
3. Rockies, Avs, Broncos, Nuggets win championships the same year.
2. Entire *Final Fantasy* series on Xbox
1. Acceptance into University of Colorado-Boulder

I don't have email, I'm just a puppy, umm, I mean intern.

■ **FIND FRANK'S DRAWING:** One of the pictures above was not drawn by a real artist. Can you find it?



Issue 26 ■ Holiday 2003

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MEDIA WITH PASSION
San Francisco, London, Bath, Milan, Paris



There will be a host of new levels to back up the new costumes and online options.

It's easy to forget that the *DOA* series actually has a plot, and these tanks have something to do with it.

Again, Itagaki shows his flair for practical clothing designs, with an emphasis on modesty.

Beautifully rendered and animated characters are the hallmark of the *DOA* series.

DEVELOPER: **TEAM NINJA** | PUBLISHER: **TECMO** | RELEASE DATE: **SPRING 2004**

ONLY ON XBOX

DOA Online

Get ready for the online fight of your life

If you haven't played the original *Dead or Alive 3* for Xbox, you're actually missing arguably the prettiest game on the system, even after two years. Seriously, the graphics are *that* good. Why? Because Tomonobu Itagaki does things with consoles that we can't even begin to understand.

What we *do* understand, though, is Live and the fact that right now, there are no 3D fighting games on Live. *Dead or Alive Online* is set to change all that.

Online modes include head to head and tag team battles, but remain shrouded in secrecy for now.

The game is a mélange of previous *DOA* games, including elements and characters from *Dead or Alive*, *Dead or Alive 2*, and the most recent, *Dead or Alive 3*. The graphics will be mostly up to and beyond the levels set by *DOA3*, with one amusing exception: Itagaki plans to include the original graphics from the first Sega Saturn iteration of the game, just for fun.

Featuring a bevy of busty beauties, and a posse of posey, ummm, peeps, the game's mixture of grappling, blocking, kicking, and punching puts it up there with the likes of *Tekken* and *Virtua Fighter*. The addition of an online dimension should take it above and beyond either of those classics.

The online modes will include head to head and tag team battles, but remain shrouded in secrecy for now. What we do know, however, is that Itagaki is planning some all-new server-side technology to enable and encourage trans-Pacific and Atlantic battles between Europe, Japan, and the USA. XBOX

NINJA CRINGER: Tomonobu Itagaki is also hard at work putting the finishing touches on *Ninja Gaiden*, although he did not work on the arcade original.

HARDCORE UPROAR: *Dead or Alive 2* first appeared on Dreamcast – the semi-sequel *DOA: Hardcore* appeared on PS2 a few months later.

House of Pain!

Adrian Chmielarz, Project Leader on Dreamcatcher's intense Live-enabled shooter *Painkiller*, spoke exclusively with Official Xbox Magazine about the horrors and joys contained in the game. Its developer, People Can Fly, plans to ship the title in Summer 2004, so this may be your post-*Halo 2* treat.

US: Can you tell us about *Painkiller*'s storyline and the main character? What is the player's motivation throughout the game?

HIM: How would you feel if you died and found yourself stuck in Purgatory, facing evil creatures of the dark while fighting for your soul? Confused? Would your confusion grow if you met Archangel Sammael who offered you a deal: a chance to go to Heaven in exchange for becoming Heaven's hit-man and killing four demons and Lucifer's main general? Would you go for it? *Painkiller* does...

US: The game looks amazing on PC, thus far, but how does *Painkiller* separate itself from the pack of FPS titles on Xbox? What types of technology are you using?

HIM: Horror atmosphere, stunning visuals and physics, and some unique gameplay twists (like monsters' intelligent cooperation). We demand a lot from ourselves in every area: gameplay, graphics, sounds, etc. I guess I could go on forever about how *Painkiller* does this or that, but one of the things we are very proud of is the physics. It's fairly easy nowadays to add physics to the game, but it's not that easy to make the physics an integral part of the game. I believe we managed to do that in a couple of places and you will really enjoy this new gaming quality.

US: Can you give us some examples of what the levels in the game will be like and what types of environments players will encounter?

HIM: There are no sacrifices here, every single level in the game is made from scratch and virtually no texture or model from any other level is re-used! This way we have achieved great diversity in the battlefields, which vary from an abandoned prison through castle ruins to a haunted opera house and hellish crematorium.



■ When it comes to bringing pain, the chaingun certainly does the trick.

US: How are boss battles structured? What types of rewards and unlockables can be gained? Is there some sort of grading or ranking system in the game?

HIM: Ah, bosses, crème de la crème of action games... What can I say; we have truly amazing bosses that do things never before seen in games. For example, Saphathorael – with his giant hammer – can destroy literally the architecture of a whole level, and it's totally non-scripted, it all happens in real time and according to real physics. We stick to the rules: you cannot beat the boss by pure firepower; you need to find the key to his weakness, as well as understand their method of attack in order to survive.

As for the secrets and such, well, we are not just developers, we're gamers too, and we know how much fun it is to discover secrets, unlock stuff, etc. Rest assured we have great plans for something like that in *Painkiller*.

US: What types of Xbox-only features are you hoping to include? Will there be online modes or off line multiplayer modes?

HIM: You cannot just take the PC game and do a direct port. You need to redesign a lot in order to make sure the game is still tons of fun with a different controller. Apart from some cool extras like new levels, monsters, and weapons, we're also planning on adding new multiplayer modes to support Live, and other Xbox exclusives. With Xbox's broadband we can do modes not possible in the PC version.

US: What are you most proud of achieving thus far with *Painkiller*, and what are you hoping to achieve with the final product?

HIM: The best thing that happened to *Painkiller* is simple: it's unbelievably great fun to play. We have people who finished the demo levels dozens of times, just to enjoy the physics or monster's behavior. Our schedule slipped a bit, because we cannot help ourselves and stop playing multiplayer... Visuals, sounds, and physics – I think we have managed to achieve something extraordinary here. But without the gameplay, it'll be all for nothing. So I was really happy when we first showed the game to public at E3 and it turned out people were enjoying their time – and coming back for more.

■ **DESTRUCTO:** The environments in *Painkiller* can all be completely destroyed by you and by the enemy. In fact, bosses actually use the environments to try and beat you down. Cool stuff.

CABLEFREE

Cables are a nightmare, snaking inexorably from the back of your AV setup, threatening to overwhelm your very existence with their tentacles of hate and rage. So try the $99 System Selector Pro from Pelican Accessories. It's the size of an AV component, has eight AV inputs (including component video for HD and optical digital audio) and three Ethernet ports for swapping between, say, your Xbox and a home theater PC. And it comes in black or silver. Full review next month.

■ SYSTEM SELECTOR PRO You can customize the buttons on the front to suit your existing setup.

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR: DEVELOPER DIARY Part One

I'm Laralyn McWilliams, Lead Designer for *Full Spectrum Warrior*. For the next few issues, I'll be giving you a behind-the-scenes look at the development of *FSW*.

FSW got its start when project Director William Henry Stahl read *Black Hawk Down* and became interested in leveraging Pandemic's *Dark Reign 2* technology to create a new kind of RTS. Instead of controlling large numbers of units and vehicles from a God-like perspective, he put you on the battlefield with the soldiers, experiencing the action first-hand.

At the same time, the Institute for Creative Technologies (a joint venture between USC and the Army) and Sony Pictures Imageworks (SPI) were beginning to plan a training simulation for Army soldiers. Wil's idea for a ground-level RTS was a perfect fit with ICT's need to create a training product so fun that soldiers would choose to play it during their free time.


■ When not praying for more texture memory, Laralyn McWilliams is busy making *Full Spectrum Warrior* for Xbox.


■ Taking full advantage of the Xbox, *Full Spectrum Warrior* is easily one of the best-looking games on any console... and it's still early.


■ Every member of your squad is counting on you to lead them safely through missions. That's a lot of pressure.

POLL
The Readers Say

What hardware feature is most important for the next Xbox?

Option	Vote
Faster processor	9%
More memory	37%
Better graphics chip	33%
Bigger hard drive	2%
Something new	19%

■ **BONUS ISSUE:** Most people in the world use a calendar that has 12 months... not us. We do 13 issues a year, and since nobody will wake up and name the thirteenth month, we call it Holiday. Enjoy lucky 13!

Rumor Mole

Armder and Dangerouser



My spies tell me that the chaps at Planet Moon Studios have already begun work on the sequel to *Armed and Dangerous* and that the game will feature expansive online, selectable players, and vastly improved water. As you can read in our review on page 84, the game is already brilliant, but these additions for the sequel certainly sound promising. Obviously this isn't official since I'm certain LucasArts will wait to see how the original sells before embarking on a sequel.

Half-Leak 2



I've heard from my sources that the leaked *Half-Life 2* PC code that has caused delays in the PC version won't affect the planned Xbox release. It is still tentatively scheduled to be released by the end of next year and is rumored to feature some all-new multiplayer modes and even some maps that aren't in the PC version. That being said, if the PC game gets delayed even longer than expected, then the Xbox version could follow suit since Valve is doing both projects internally... for now.

Project Download

The game that has to be considered the killer app for Xbox Live is *Project Gotham Racing 2,* and my sources are telling me that they have some suh-weet downloads on the way including entire cities from the first game all glossed up to the sheen of the sequel. Other rumored downloads are an entirely new car class, new music, and a bunch of new tracks in current cities. If this is true, you can bet we'll be downloading the best *PGR* city ever (San Francisco) the very first day it comes out.

Overheard



Fresh upon the success of *Star Wars: KOTOR* are four new *Star Wars* games coming to Xbox next year… Acclaim is apparently working on a deal with a "major player" on a new Xbox title… Shiny (developer of *Enter The Matrix*) is staffing up again in a big way, which means you can expect a new *Matrix* game in time for the *Matrix Revolutions* DVD release. Which isn't really all that far away. Let's hope the boys and girls at Shiny take note of the criticisms leveled at the last *Matrix* outing.

Uppers and Downers

How this month's news affects the world of videogames

Project Awesome Too

Project Gotham Racing 2 changes the complexion of Xbox Live play, and shows what happens when a game is always Live.



Grand Theft Heft

GTA rocks the house with epic gameplay and improved graphics, but predictably becomes the whipping boy for conservatives and bored trial lawyers.

Cash-Cube-Lube

GameCube sells better – but only after the price drops through the floor – and free games are included. Can the purple box fight it out with the big boys after all?



Half-Life Strife

Game delayed and code stolen – it went from being the E3 fairy tale to a Christmas missing nightmare for Valve.



Gagging on the Gage

Nokia's N-Gage has had a tough go of it as US retailers are already discounting the price. Perhaps a hardware revision is in the works.

Hard Stuff

Logitech Thunderpad

Bring the thunder

www.logitech.com

Every time we see a new third-party controller, we inevitably fall back to the Controller S. It rules. And though the Thunderpad is certainly a decent piece of hardware, we again returned to the S after spending quality time with it. At $20, it's cheap, and it's got the should-now-be-standard rubber grips on the handles. Even the size feels absolutely right.

The problem is the face buttons. They're too close together for our tastes, and on more than one occasion we mashed more buttons than we wanted. There's a turbo function, but nothing compelled us to use it. We like this pad, but only recommend it to people looking for an alternative.



Pros
- Cheap, good sticks, rubber handles

Cons
- Face buttons too cramped

Price: $19.99



Official Xbox Magazine Rating: 7.5

Saitek Adrenalin Stick

Great stick... no Live

www.saitek.com

Although there's really only a couple of games ideally suited to this stick, it functions remarkably well in a range of less-than-suitable titles thanks to high build quality and some cool design features. Naturally you'd want to consider this stick right away for *Crimson Skies*, and if like us, you're planning on spending a long time playing the game on Live, you'd think this might be the ideal solution. Well, you'd be wrong. Amazingly, unforgivably, and bizarrely, the Adrenalin Stick has no memory card slot. So that means no Xbox Live headset.

Weirdly, that's just about its only failing, but it's a huge one. The stick features tremendous (and powerful) rumble functionality, cool throttle levers and fantastic button placement. As long as your chosen games let you configure controls even a little, this'll work brilliantly – *Air Force Delta* and *Crimson Skies* responded perfectly. But the lack of a memory card (and therefore headset use) is a huge ding against an otherwise admirable peripheral.



Pros
- Great build quality, nice features

Cons
- No memory card slot and therefore no Live chat

Price: $39.95

Official Xbox Magazine Rating: 8.0

GameShark GameSaves

Masterful memory management

You'll never see a *real* Xbox GameShark (cheating with Live-enabled games = bad), but this is a nice compromise. With GameSaves you can download save files that unlock everything for tons 'o Xbox titles, and users can even upload their own handiwork, which will really open things up.

Included are a disc, instructions, and a USB dongle that connects your memory card to your Windows-based PC. The installation is clean (i.e. no bloatware extras), which greatly pleased us, and the program's Windows Explorer-esque interface is simple and easy to use.

You can even back up your hard drive contents to your PC (via the memory card). Now that's smart.



Pros
- Easy to use
- No frills installation
- Download new save games for free

Cons
- Requires a memory card
- Not many save files available at press time
- No Mac support

Price: $24.99

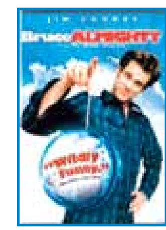
Official Xbox Magazine Rating: 8.5



Bruce Almighty

DVD

STUDIO UNIVERSAL



When Gene Shalit describes a movie as 'Wildly Funny," you know your only option is to strap on your crap-proof reinforced titanium laughing pants and buckle up for a "Rollercoaster Ride" that'll be "the Comedy Smash of the Summer!" Or not. As it turns out, *Bruce Almighty* is an enjoyable comedy with a couple of laugh-out-loud moments. Jim Carrey is likeable and (for him) subtle in the role of underdog-made-God-for-a-week. Predictably, he uses his powers in flawed yet innocent ways, discovering along the road that being God isn't as simple as he'd imagined. The DVD ships with deleted scenes, an enjoyable featurette called "The Process of Jim," and a worthwhile director's commentary. In short, no people were harmed during the making of or watching of this DVD.

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (Special Edition)

DVD

STUDIO PIONEER



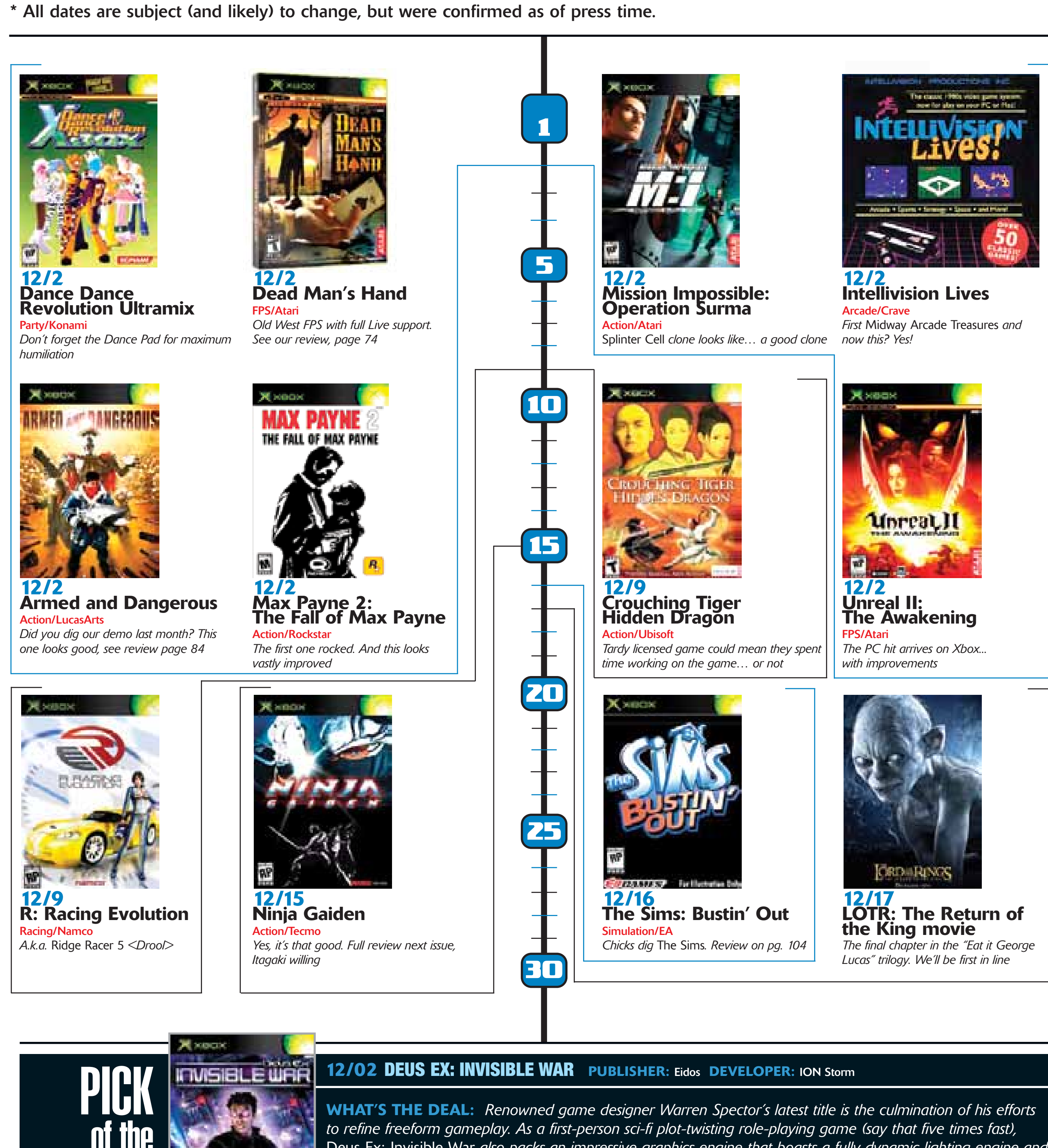
If by "special edition" you mean "the same DVD from a couple years back wrapped up in some really fly packaging," then we're on the same page here. Not that we don't love it! We *do*. It's just that this was clearly designed to tie in with the recent *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* theatrical redux/homage (featuring prettier teens and a more "sympathetic" Leatherface), so don't get mixed up. The 1974 low-budget shock-horror cannibalism classic, which Rex Reed called "the most terrifying motion picture I have ever seen," is presented here in a widescreen digital transfer with surround sound. It has your typical gallery of deleted scenes and theatrical trailers, but the real draw here is the director/Leatherface audio commentary, which gives an amusing insight into Hooper's cutthroat methods of guerrilla filmmaking. Just how zany did it get? Let's just say that chainsaw had a real blade on it the whole time.

GALAXIES GONE?: *Star Wars Galaxies*, which had been scheduled to appear on the Xbox soon, is still lost in limbo with no official word on its whereabouts... stay tuned.

WHAT ABOUT THE DUKE?: While many small-handed weaklings on staff prefer the Controller S, a few of us manly gamers (Frank and Mike) still swear by the bulky original pad (called the Duke).

WHAT TO DO IN DECEMBER

* All dates are subject (and likely) to change, but were confirmed as of press time.



12/2
Dance Dance Revolution Ultramix
Party/Konami
Don't forget the Dance Pad for maximum humiliation

12/2
Dead Man's Hand
FPS/Atari
Old West FPS with full Live support. See our review, page 74

12/2
Mission Impossible: Operation Surma
Action/Atari
Splinter Cell *clone looks like… a good clone*

12/2
Intellivision Lives
Arcade/Crave
First Midway Arcade Treasures *and now this? Yes!*

12/2
Armed and Dangerous
Action/LucasArts
Did you dig our demo last month? This one looks good, see review page 84

12/2
Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne
Action/Rockstar
The first one rocked. And this looks vastly improved

12/9
Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon
Action/Ubisoft
Tardy licensed game could mean they spent time working on the game… or not

12/2
Unreal II: The Awakening
FPS/Atari
The PC hit arrives on Xbox… with improvements

12/9
R: Racing Evolution
Racing/Namco
A.k.a. Ridge Racer 5 <Drool>

12/15
Ninja Gaiden
Action/Tecmo
Yes, it's that good. Full review next issue, Itagaki willing

12/16
The Sims: Bustin' Out
Simulation/EA
Chicks dig The Sims. *Review on pg. 104*

12/17
LOTR: The Return of the King movie
The final chapter in the "Eat it George Lucas" trilogy. We'll be first in line



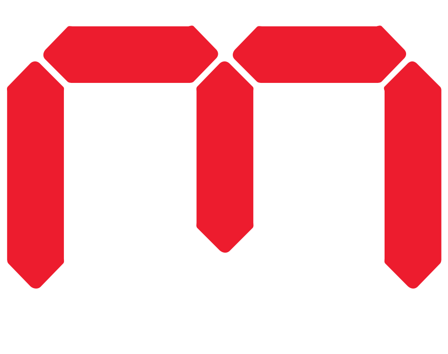


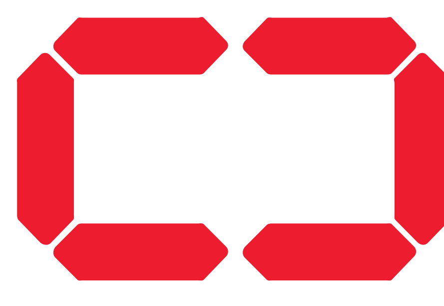
12/02 DEUS EX: INVISIBLE WAR **PUBLISHER:** Eidos **DEVELOPER:** ION Storm

WHAT'S THE DEAL: *Renowned game designer Warren Spector's latest title is the culmination of his efforts to refine freeform gameplay. As a first-person sci-fi plot-twisting role-playing game (say that five times fast),* Deus Ex: Invisible War *also packs an impressive graphics engine that boasts a fully dynamic lighting engine and a detailed physics model.*

THE FINAL WORD: Invisible War *does a lot right and very little wrong. Flip to page 72 now to read our world exclusive review and find out why this bad boy garnered an Editor's Choice award.*

IN DEBT: You can keep pace with the onslaught of holiday releases and still have enough money for Cool Ranch Doritos by opening a new credit card specifically for buying Xbox games. It's kinda free…






Holiday Gift Guide

Trying to figure out what to give or get for holidays this year? Presenting the most comprehensive Xbox gift guide ever assembled, with everything you need to make your Xbox hum this holiday season!

HOLIDAY HOT SHOTS

These had all better be under the tree on Xmas morning

Project Gotham Racing 2

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT | WWW.XBOX.COM

Why You Want It: You played the last one.
Why You Need It: This one blows the original away.



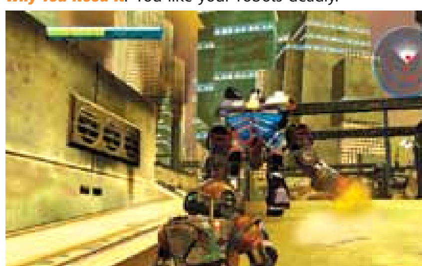
If you had told us while we were playing the original *Project Gotham Racing* that the game could actually get a lot better, we probably would have called you crazy. But *PGR2* is loaded with amazing new improvements, far more detailed graphics, and Xbox Live gameplay that no other racer can match. See review, page 82. Then play the demo on our disc!

$49.99

Metal Arms: Glitch in the System

PUBLISHER: VIVENDI | WWW.VUGAMES.COM

Why You Want It: You like your robots cute.
Why You Need It: You like your robots deadly.



We've come to expect our videogame robots to be giant. But *Metal Arms* thwarted our expectations by making its star robot so cute that you'll want to squeeze it like a teddy bear. That would probably be a bad idea, though, because this robot is heavily armed and could easily decapitate you in a deadly but oh-so-adorable maneuver.

$49.99

Grand Theft Auto Double Pack

PUBLISHER: ROCKSTAR | WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM

Why You Want It: Because it's one of the best games ever.
Why You Need It: Because it's two of the best games ever.



Xbox owners will finally get to find out what all the fuss was about on the PS2. All you'll need is an hour or two to get hooked and you'll quickly realize why *GTA*'s open-ended gameplay has been copied throughout the industry. This game should be required playing for every grown-up Xbox gamer.

$49.99

Ninja Gaiden

PUBLISHER: TECMO | WWW.TECMOINC.COM

Why You Want It: Team Ninja hasn't let us down yet.
Why You Need It: They're not about to start with *Ninja Gaiden*.



This is the game that we've all been waiting for – brilliant action gameplay with *DOA3*-quality graphics. From what we've seen to this point, *Ninja Gaiden* lives up to all the hype and gives us even more. This is perhaps the one game that should make just about every Xbox gamer happy.

$49.99

Links 2004

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT | WWW.XBOX.COM

Why You Want It: You want to hit the golf course with style.
Why You Need It: A wicked slice and repeated golf cart abuses got you banned from the country club.



It takes some serious guts to take on *Tiger Woods*. Fortunately, Microsoft has the guts and *Links* has the goods to stand against the very best in console golf. The visuals are stunning and the control dead-on. Hardcore golfers will love the myriad of options hidden within this game, and newbies will love the ease of use and online play.

$49.99

Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time

PUBLISHER: UBISOFT | WWW.UBISOFT.COM

Why You Want It: Because it's gorgeous and plays great.
Why You Need It: This is the game the latest *Tomb Raider* should have been.



Wow, this franchise has really picked up its game. *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* is a stunningly attractive action game that you have to see in motion to properly appreciate. However, this game isn't all visuals. The gameplay is rock solid, and the level design is fantastic. This is the kind of game you can go back to again and again.

$49.99

THE ACTION FACTION

Games so violent, you'll wish your stocking was made of Kevlar

Armed and Dangerous

TOP PICK!

PUBLISHER: LUCASARTS | WWW.LUCASARTS.COM

Why You Want It: This game is action-packed.
Why You Need It: This game is often hilarious.



Planet Moon's last game, *Giants*, was one of the funniest games we've ever played. *Armed and Dangerous* may be even more over-the-top. But don't think for a second that gameplay is sacrificed for gags. The game's frenetic action is rock solid and punctuated by some of the most original superweapons we've seen in years.

$49.99

True Crime: Streets of L.A.

PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION | WWW.ACTIVISION.COM

Why You Want It: You're sick of waiting for *GTA III* Xbox.
Why You Need It: It's the biggest *GTA III*-style game yet.



When trying to compare *True Crime* with other games of its ilk, the word "bigger" keeps springing to mind. The game environment is much larger than any similar title, there's a tremendous variety of cars, and weapons and the fighting systems is massively deep.

$49.99

Legacy of Kain: Defiance

PUBLISHER: EIDOS | WWW.EIDOS.COM

Why You Want It: You loved *Soul Reaver* or *Legacy of Kain*.
Why You Need It: You loved *Soul Reaver* and *Legacy of Kain*.



Raziel and Kain join forces in the best-looking *Legacy of Kain* game ever. The combination of two slightly different kinds of games and the melding of two stories is a promising combination for anyone who likes a little bit of blood sucking. Plenty of action and enough tasty hemoglobin for even the thirstiest vampires.

$49.99

Terminator 3: Rise Of The Machines

PUBLISHER: ATARI | WWW.ATARI.COM

Why You Want It: Arnold's your hero.
Why You Need It: He's also your governor… this game could be mandatory.



It seems that game developers are finally starting to make movie licensed games right. Just look at *T3*: It's got all the original key voice actors and tons of hidden easter eggs with cool movie content. With excellent first-person graphics and a fighting engine borrowed from *Enter the Matrix*, *Rise of the Machines* might just have the best of both worlds.

$49.99

REVIEWS PENDING: While many of the games we selected have been reviewed and officially stamped "great," some of them are only based on expectations and best guesses.

LAUGH IF YOU MUST: Being based in beautiful Brisbane, California, we are sad to report that our governor is Arnold. On the bright side, our governor can beat the crap out of your governor.



SPORTS FIX

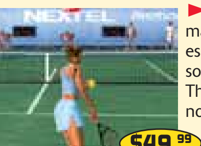
Sports games for that special someone with a competitive streak

Top Spin

TOP PICK!

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS
WWW.XSNSPORTS.COM

Why You Want It: It's kind of like *Pong Evolved*.
Why You Need It: Three words: *Pong Evolved* online.



▶ Tennis games have always made enjoyable sports games, especially when you're playing someone head to head. Thanks to Xbox Live, you'll now be able to find human competition 24/7 on the XSN Sports network.

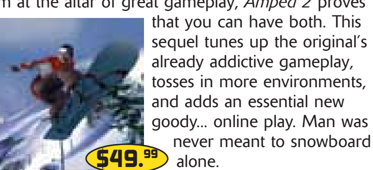
$49.99

Amped 2

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
WWW.XBOX.COM

Why You Want It: You loved the first *Amped*.
Why You Need It: This one is even better...

▶ While other snowboarding games gleefully sacrifice realism at the altar of great gameplay, *Amped 2* proves that you can have both. This sequel tunes up the original's already addictive gameplay, tosses in more environments, and adds an essential new goody... online play. Man was never meant to snowboard alone.



$49.99

NBA Live 2004

PUBLISHER: EA SPORTS
WWW.EA.COM

Why You Want It: You need more basketball.
Why You Need It: Total control on and off the court.



▶ The best basketball game on Xbox combines deep on the court gameplay with an amazingly addictive dynasty mode off the court. Bust a sweet fade-away and bust out some inflated beer prices on the fans.

$49.99

ESPN College Hoops

PUBLISHER: SEGA | WWW.SEGA.COM

Why You Want It: You're suffering from March Madness.
Why You Need It: Visual Concepts knows how to make a great basketball game.



▶ The fast breaks are now a key part of the game, the ball handlers have more wicked moves, and you're given far more control options to choose from. This is all on top of the franchise's already deep simulation features.

$49.99

Tony Hawk's Underground

PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION | WWW.ACTIVISION.COM

Why You Want It: One of the best videogame series ever.
Why You Need It: Now you can get off the board.

▶ The dudes at Neversoft never take a break – just look at *THUG*. This latest edition in the skateboarding series that started it all takes on elements from *GTA* and revamps the career mode with cool mission-based gameplay, tasty new graphics, and a truckload of new tricks.

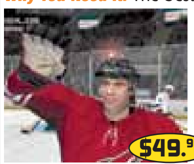


$49.99

ESPN NHL HOCKEY

PUBLISHER: SEGA
WWW.SEGA.COM

Why You Want It: You love hockey but want your teeth.
Why You Need It: The best hockey game anywhere.



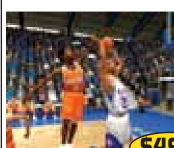
▶ The depth and playability of this game is second to none on Xbox. Total realism and a fast-playing, graphically stunning game will make any hockey fan happy this holiday season.

$49.99

NCAA March Madness 2004

PUBLISHER: EA SPORTS
WWW.EA.COM

Why You Want It: You love college hoops.
Why You Need It: This is the fastest college hoops game.



▶ Mix the tight, fast-paced gameplay of *NBA Live* with the brilliant recruiting and dynasty mode of *NCAA Football*. Freestyle control is great fun in *NBA Live*, but in the college game it works even better.

$49.99

FIFA Soccer 2004

PUBLISHER: EA | WWW.EA.COM

Why You Want It: To bend it like Beckham.
Why You Need It: This is the deepest *FIFA* ever.

▶ The two coolest new off-season tweaks are a hyper-detailed franchise mode and "off the ball control," which lets you guide your other player to get open for passes. And as always, *FIFA* is mind-bogglingly deep. It's simply an amazing game.



$49.99

IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

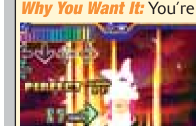
Nice games for quiet quality times

Dance Dance Revolution Ultramix Bundle

TOP PICK!

PUBLISHER: KONAMI | WWW.KONAMI.COM/USA

Why You Want It: You're not getting enough exercise playing *KOTOR*.
Why You Need It: You got no rhythm.



▶ Now you can combine two things that should never be together – videogames and profuse sweating. It's just unnatural.

$64.99

The Sims: Bustin' Out

PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS | WWW.EA.COM

Why You Want It: Your Sims need a better life.
Why You Need It: They'll get it here.

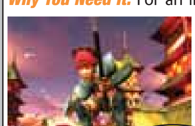
▶ *Bustin' Out* offers general improvements over the original console *Sims* including an upgraded Create-a-Sim mode, more complex interactions, new items, and tons of clever new challenges. Check out our review on page 104.

$49.99

Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup

PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
WWW.EA.COM

Why You Want It: You're a big Harry Potter fan and you want to try some Quidditch.
Why You Need It: For an imaginary sports sim, this game isn't half bad.



▶ The license is perfect and the game is treated with the respect due a real sport, and a level of depth that really surprised us.

$39.99

Trivial Pursuit: Unhinged

PUBLISHER: ATARI | WWW.ATARI.COM

Why You Want It: You're full of useless facts.
Why You Need It: If you don't use them, your brain will probably explode.



▶ We've never been able to figure out how you can tell if the computer is cheating in a trivia videogame. Doesn't it know all the answers? So, when it gets one wrong, is it just toying with you to make you feel better?

$29.99

HOLIDAY HARDWARE

Lasr Accessories GamePak

WWW.LASRACCESSORIES.COM

Why You Want It: So you can hike to a LAN picnic.
Why You Need It: So you can play your Xbox right out of the bag.

▶ There are plenty of bags and cases for the Xbox out there, but few let you play the system right out of the bag (there are flaps for cables to pass through) and fewer still come in this spine-saving backpack style. Vents for keeping things cool and pockets for games, memory cards, and headset should make traveling lighter.

$39.99



■ **ONE LESS CAR:** The Lasr GamePak is the perfect solution for environmentally aware gamers that use the bicycle as a means of transportation. But the Xbox is still real heavy.



DIAL "A" FOR ADVENTUROUSNESS

Adventures for the patient and thoughtful

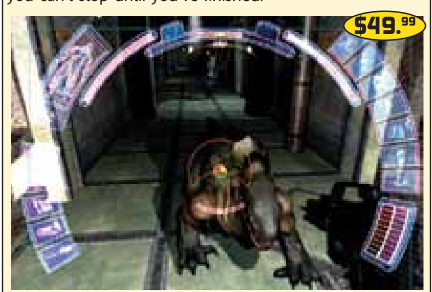
Deus Ex: Invisible War

TOP PICK!

PUBLISHER: EIDOS | WWW.EIDOS.COM

Why You Want It: You're looking for the next great RPG on Xbox.
Why You Need It: You like your RPGs with 100% less Orcs and 200% more explosive weaponry.

The graphics are stunning and the lighting engine is simply amazing. But even if this weren't a beautiful game, we'd still line up to play it because of the depth of design and open-ended style of storytelling. Just check out our World Exclusive Review on page 72 to get all the details on what is arguably one of the best Xbox games this year. It's the kind of game that, once you start playing, you can't stop until you've finished.



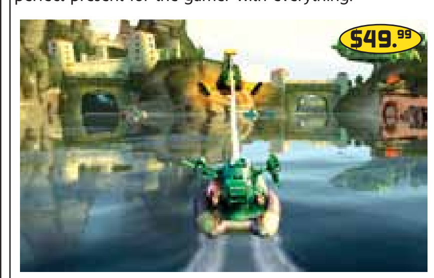
$49.99

Beyond Good and Evil

PUBLISHER: UBISOFT | WWW.UBISOFT.COM

Why You Want It: You loved *Rayman*.
Why You Need It: The creator of *Rayman* has made a new game... and it includes arms!

Although it's difficult to strictly categorize *Beyond Good and Evil* into a single game genre, it's closest to the lush adventure games that once populated the PC landscape – crossed with the visual tastiness of a French platformer. This game's got an engrossing story, fantastically designed characters, and environments that will simply blow your mind. We give the game an Editor's Choice Award in our review on page 98. So you know it's good, and you know it's kinda different. The perfect present for the gamer with everything.



$49.99

Mission Impossible: Operation Surma

PUBLISHER: ATARI | WWW.ATARI.COM

Why You Want It: You're a gadget junkie.
Why You Need It: There're a ton of cool gadgets in here.

It's all about gadgets and disguise, so there's a lot of thinking in this game... but the good kind, not the painful kind caused by gaping plot holes (like in the movie).



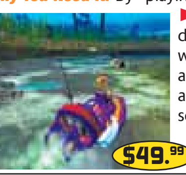
$49.99

Voodoo Vince

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
WWW.XBOX.COM

Why You Want It: You love playing with dolls.
Why You Need It: By "playing" we mean "torturing."

A fun romp through a detailed and entertaining world that can be classified as a platform game *and* an adventure. Plus the little guy is so cute that you just can't resist his little burlap face.



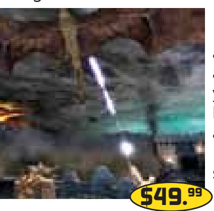
$49.99

The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King

PUBLISHER: EA | WWW.EA.COM

Why You Want It: You really want to kick some Orc.
Why You Need It: This could be one of the coolest movie-license games ever made.

The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King is already shaping up to be a monumental game... you could even say epic. Building on the brilliant and frenetic gameplay of *The Two Towers*, this sequel is bigger, badder, and deeper than its predecessor. And if you add in the game's cool multiplayer features, you're going to see some of the most amazing battles ever rendered in a videogame. The branching paths allow you to follow the many paths of the final movie in the trilogy and gives you choice and replayability in the game. The interactive environments and smooth transitions from actual movie footage to beautifully rendered gameplay are sheer brilliance. You read all about this one a few issues ago and we still mean everything we said then. This is one of the surefire hits of the holiday season.



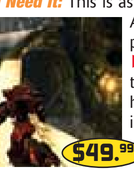
$49.99

Apocalyptica

PUBLISHER: KONAMI | WWW.KONAMI.COM

Why You Want It: You're wishing this world would hurry up and end already.
Why You Need It: This is as close as you can get to Armageddon without all those pesky doomsday plagues.

In *Apocalyptica* you face the ultimate level boss, Satan himself... or, if you're so inclined, you can join forces with the big red dude and fight against the good.



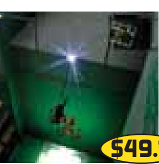
$49.99

Rogue Ops

PUBLISHER: KEMCO
WWW.KEMCO.COM

Why You Want It: Lara just doesn't cut it anymore.
Why You Need It: The kill combo system is pretty cool.

We were tempted to dismiss this title as yet another *Metal Gear Solid* knockoff, but *Rogue Ops* brings some cool new features to the table (besides the sultry Nikki Conners, of course). Our favorite innovation is a kill combo system that requires you to quickly match a button combo on your game pad to pull off a kill.



$49.99

GO JUMP IN A GAME

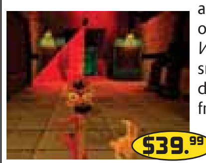
Platform antics for siblings with a spring in their step

Whiplash

PUBLISHER: EIDOS
WWW.EIDOS.COM

Why You Want It: It's kinda twisted.
Why You Need It: This one's got a serious funny bone.

There are a lot of people who think there's nothing funny about inhumane experiments on laboratory animals. Most likely, none of them have ever played *Whiplash*, because this smooth-playing platformer derives all sorts of humor from the situation. Plus, it's got monkeys – lots and lots of monkeys.



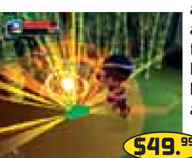
$39.99

I Ninja

PUBLISHER: NAMCO
WWW.NAMCO.COM

Why You Want It: You wish that ninjas were cuddlier.
Why You Need It: It's a heck of a lot of fun.

Apparently, even the deadly ninja starts out as a kid. *I Ninja* tells the story of one ninja kid (or possibly an adult ninja with some sort of acute glandular problem) in a fast action platform adventure. Either way, he's small, his head is abnormally massive, and yet he still kicks major bad-guy butt.



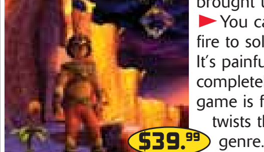
$49.99

Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy

PUBLISHER: THQ
WWW.THQ.COM

Why You Want It: You'd like to play a pretty platformer.
Why You Need It: It's made by the same developers who brought us *Buffy*.

You can light yourself on fire to solve one conundrum. It's painful, bizarre, and completely original. The whole game is filled with care and twists that reinvigorate the genre.



$39.99

HOLIDAY HARDWARE

Creative Labs MuVo2

WWW.CREATIVE.COM

Why You Want It: Big storage, tiny price.
Why You Need It: Smaller than a pack of smokes.

With a startling 1.5GB drive squirreled away in a tiny form factor, the MuVo2 packs up to 850 songs into a truly portable digital music player. A bargain at less than $230, USB 2.0 high-speed transfers and a svelte 3.2 ounces make it a real alternative to Apple's mighty iPod.





$229.99

THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE: THE RETURN OF THE THE: We love Tolkien as much as the next fantasy geek, but what's with the overuse of the word "the." Four times in one title?

A SHINY NEW GUN UNDER THE TREE

Shooters for friends who hate to miss

Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3

TOP PICK!

PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT | WWW.UBISOFT.COM

Why You Want It: You love the play of *Ghost Recon*.



Why You Need It: You love the graphics of *Splinter Cell*.

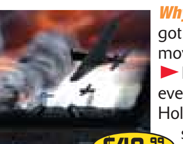
► *Rainbow Six 3* is not only a brilliant-looking Xbox game with a heart-stopping single-player campaign, but it will also be one of the best Xbox Live games this holiday.

$49.99

Medal of Honor: Rising Sun

PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS | WWW.EA.COM

Why You Want It: You loved *MOH: Allied Assault*.



Why You Need It: *Rising Sun*'s got even more blockbuster movie moments.

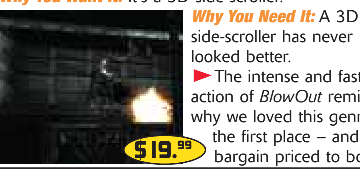
► Rising Sun should remind everyone that unlike Hollywood sequels, videogame sequels are often better than their predecessor.

$49.99

BlowOut: Military Fighting Unit

PUBLISHER: MAJESCO | WWW.MAJESCO.COM

Why You Want It: It's a 3D side-scroller.



Why You Need It: A 3D side-scroller has never looked better.

► The intense and fast-paced action of *BlowOut* reminds us why we loved this genre in the first place – and it's bargain priced to boot.

$19.99

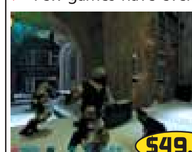
Counter-Strike

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT | WWW.XBOX.COM

Why You Want It: One of the best online games ever.

Why You Need It: It will be even better on Xbox Live.

► Few games have ever enjoyed as much online success as *Counter-Strike*. The PC mod for *Half-Life* is still the most-played game on the Internet. And now, with Xbox-specific features like voice-chat, this franchise might end up being the most played game on Xbox Live as well.



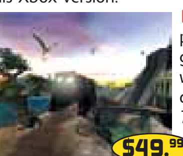
$49.99

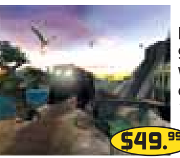
Unreal 2: The Awakening

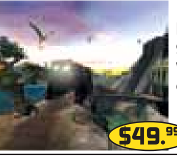
PUBLISHER: ATARI | WWW.ATARI.COM

Why You Want It: You can't get enough *Unreal*.

Why You Need It: There's a ton of new depth added to this Xbox version.







► You get the same phenomenal single-player game as the PC version, but with significant multiplayer depth added on – including *Team Fortress*-style "class-based" combat and *Halo*-esque vehicles.

$49.99

kill.switch

PUBLISHER: NAMCO | WWW.NAMCO.COM

Why You Want It: You want a little more action out of your third-person shooter.

Why You Need It: This game's got a ton of unique new moves to mix up the gameplay.

► Fitting somewhere in between the all-out action of *Dead to Rights* and the more cerebral skulking of a franchise like *Metal Gear Solid*, *kill.switch* offers stealthy third-person gameplay and plenty of action.

$49.99

Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne

PUBLISHER: ROCKSTAR
WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM

Why You Want It: You love pain.

Why You Need It: You loved *Max Payne*.

► We know the PC game is awesome and expect the Xbox version to be equal in its awesomeness.

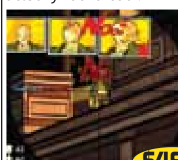
$49.99

XIII

PUBLISHER: UBISOFT | WWW.UBISOFT.COM

Why You Want It: Your cartoons don't have enough shooting in them.

Why You Need It: Cel-shading in a first-person shooter actually looks cool.



► Nice to see a game in which the plot actually matters. *XIII* is filled with gobs o' paranoia and twisty turns of the tale. If the game can do the same, we won't feel so bad about shooting cartoons. See our review, page 102.

$49.99

WHAT THE HECK IS THAT?

Gifts that defy categorization

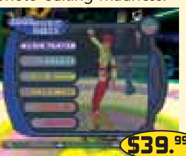
Xbox Music Mixer

TOP PICK!

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT | WWW.XBOX.COM

Why You Want It: Gotta sing, gotta feel the force.

Why You Need It: Near-infinite karaoke, music, and photo editing madness.



► Bundled with a mic that plugs straight into a controller, you can strip lyrics from your favorite tunes or get new songs from xboxkaraoke.com – connect it to your PC and create slide shows, and more.

$39.99

Midway Arcade Treasures

PUBLISHER: MIDWAY | WWW.MIDWAY.COM

Why You Want It: You feel guilty for using MAME.

Why You Need It: This is one amazing collection.

► *Spy Hunter, Defender, Defender II, Gauntlet, Joust, Joust II, Paperboy, Rampage, Marble Madness, Robotron 2084, Smash TV, Bubbles, RoadBlasters, Blaster, Rampart, Sinistar, Super Sprint, 720°, Toobin', Klax, Splat!, Satan's Hollow*, and *Vindicators*. Interested? We thought so.



$19.99

Cabela's Dangerous Hunts

PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION | WWW.ACTIVISION.COM

Why You Want It: Bambi's not tough enough for you.

Why You Need It: It's actually a lot of fun.

► Recently, Cabela proved that deer hunting games could actually be a great deal of fun on the Xbox. In this quick follow-up, the animals can fight back, so you'll need to be extra careful. Don't worry, though, to the best of our knowledge none of them carry a rifle... so you still have the edge, for now.

$29.99

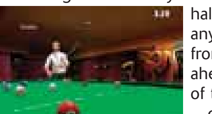
World Championship Pool 2004

PUBLISHER: JALECO
WWW.JALECO.COM

Why You Want It: You want something different.

Why You Need It: This is the only pool game on Xbox.

► Your grandma told you to stay away from the pool halls, but she never said anything about staying away from your Xbox. So go ahead, enjoy the seedier side of the pool hall life in the comfort of grandma's living room.



$39.99

HOLIDAY HARDWARE

Bose Companion 3

WWW.BOSE.COM

Why You Want It: Sleek, silver and sexy.

Why You Need It: Thrilling Bose acoustics in a tiny – but powerful – package.

► A subwoofer and two speakers don't actually provide true surround sound, but it certainly sounds like it, thanks to Bose's proprietary technology. For smaller rooms, it doesn't get any better than this, and the inclusion of a dongle with a headphone socket answers a commonly asked question.

$199.99



■ **TOP PICKS:** If you want to keep your list short so as not to offend potential gift buyers, then we can guarantee that our Top Picks in each category are sure to make you plenty happy.



RP-GENIUS

Bored of board games? Bring them to life in RPG and strategy games

Magic The Gathering: Battlegrounds

PUBLISHER: ATARI | WWW.ATARI.COM

Why You Want It: You're beginning to notice that your human *Magic* opponents kind of smell.
Why You Need It: This Xbox version doesn't stink.



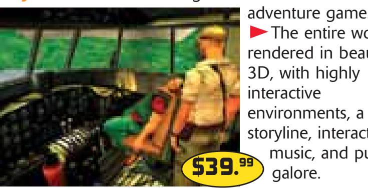
$49.99

This one definitely puts the action in action/RPG. With all of the depth of the card-game shoved in the background, the action is pushed to the front.

Broken Sword: The Sleeping Dragon

PUBLISHER: DREAMCATCHER
WWW.DREAMCATCHERGAMES.COM

Why You Want It: You miss old-fashioned adventure games.
Why You Need It: This is a great new-fashioned adventure game.



$39.99

The entire world is rendered in beautiful 3D, with highly interactive environments, a great storyline, interactive music, and puzzles galore.

Arx Fatalis

PUBLISHER: DREAMCATCHER
WWW.DREAMCATCHERGAMES.COM

Why You Want It: You long for the good old days of *Ultima Underworld*.
Why You Need It: This was a surprise hit on the PC, and fans of classic RPGs shouldn't miss it.

$39.99

Don't be thrown off by the cumbersome name. *Arx Fatalis* is a deep, fun, and beautiful RPG that invites you into a gorgeous and highly interactive game world.

Goblin Commander: Unleash The Horde

PUBLISHER: JALECO | WWW.JALECO.COM

Why You Want It: Real-time strategy games rule.
Why You Need It: This one is created by the guys behind *WarCraft II*.



$49.99

Looks phenomenal, was designed from the ground up to be played on a gamepad, *and* the lead designers worked at Blizzard on some of the finest realtime strategies ever made.

FIGHT NIGHT

For friends who favor fisticuffs

Spawn

PUBLISHER: NAMCO
WWW.NAMCO.COM

Why You Want It: You think Spawn's due.
Why You Need It: This isn't the *Spawn* game you've come to expect.

Spawn has about as dreadful of a videogame lineage as *Batman*. Both have been in countless forgettable adventures involving button-mashing. This new game, however, could be the one to break the *Spawn* slump thanks to its tasty graphics, a significant *Devil May Cry* visual influence, intuitive fighting system, and intense gameplay.



$49.99

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

PUBLISHER: UBISOFT | WWW.UBISOFT.COM

Why You Want It: You know Kung Fu.
Why You Need It: Once you know Kung Fu, there's really no sense in wasting that knowledge.



$39.99

Take control of the Hong Kong-style wire fighting that has become so popular that it shows up everywhere nowadays. Should be plenty of running up blades of grass.

HOW DO YOU WRAP A FERRARI?

Driving games for the speed demon in your family

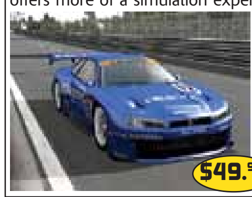
R: Racing Evolution

TOP PICK!

PUBLISHER: NAMCO | WWW.NAMCO.COM

Why You Want It: You love *Ridge Racer*.
Why You Need It: This one follows in the footsteps of *Gran Turismo*.

Following the trail blazed by *Gran Turismo*, this game offers more of a simulation experience than we've come to expect and even gives players a chance to build their own car brand. Unfortunately, we can't help but mourn the gratuitous *Ridge Racer* power slides we'll not get to experience.





$49.99

Need for Speed: Underground

PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS | WWW.EA.COM

Why You Want It: You've got a spoiler on the back of your Geo Metro, but Mom doesn't want you racing it.
Why You Need It: You've never played a game that gives you so much freedom.

$49.99

The game lets you customize your ride with a laundry list of cool accessories that go well beyond the usual paint job swaps. See our review, page 108.

Spy Hunter 2

PUBLISHER: MIDWAY | WWW.MIDWAY.COM

Why You Want It: You actually enjoyed *Spy Hunter*.
Why You Need It: The makers of *Midnight Club II* developed the game.

This sequel tops the original with more vehicles, more gadgets, tighter gameplay, and even more fun. After the surprising goodness of the original remake, we can't wait for this one. Why can't all updates be as good as this series?

$49.99

Sega GT Online

PUBLISHER: SEGA | WWW.SEGA.COM

Why You Want It: You loved *Sega GT*.
Why You Need It: You want it online.

Sega GT Online is very similar to last year's highly enjoyable racer *Sega GT*. The key difference, however, is Xbox Live support that enables you to take your skills to the open road and test yourself against the best drivers the Xbox world has to offer. Computer AI just can't compare to a human opponent.



$19.99

HOLIDAY HARDWARE

Sharp 30" Aquos TV

TINYURL.COM/PWG0

Why You Want It: Look at it. Just look at it.
Why You Need It: Component video in for Xbox HD goodness.

Thirty glorious inches of fast responding geometrically perfect flat TV, speakers that sound anything but flat, and an array of HDTV-compatible inputs means that the Sharp Aquos series is the choice of champions. It's not cheap, but you get what you pay for with some of the most advanced tech on the market.

$4,499.95



DON'T FORGET PGR2: When thinking of racing games on Xbox, think no further than *Project Gotham Racing 2*. It's in our Holiday Hotshots, which is why it isn't with the other racers.



GRAND THEFT AUTO: DOUBLE STRATEGY

Two games deserve two super strategies

We're still trying to wrap our brains around this whole Grand Theft Auto Double Pack thing. So we get both incredible GTA games in the same package? Are they kidding? Don't they realize that it will take us months to even scratch the surface of these twin masterpieces?… Forget it, we can't hold back any longer: YES! WOOHOOOO!

And now it's time for you to celebrate as we deliver all of the secrets to both titles. These are two huge games and we're here to give you a little help uncovering the best parts of each one. Play these gems with a controller in one hand and a copy of Official Xbox Magazine in the other.

Grand Theft Auto III codes!

These are just to whet your appetite. We'll be blowing out an avalanche of *GTA* codes next month. Until then, armor up and grab a tank.

Full Armor
During gameplay press BLACK, BLACK, LEFT TRIGGER, WHITE, D-pad Left, D-pad Down, D-pad Right, D-pad Up, D-pad Left, D-pad Down, D-pad Right, D-pad Up

Tank
During gameplay press B, B, B, B, B, B, RIGHT TRIGGER, WHITE, LEFT TRIGGER, Y, B, Y



Think you know it all about GTA III? Read the dirtiest GTA secrets, and you will…

1 Dodo Flying Techniques

Locations: First of all, you must find a Dodo. Go to the airport in Shoreside Vale. There are three locations that you can find the Dodo here. The first is just past the tollbooth at the entrance. Continue your path on the road and take your first right. Enter the third hangar on the right. It is in the middle of the hangar. The second one is on the same path as the first, past the hangar. Continue on until you see an airplane on your left; just after it, turn left and you will find the Dodo. The third is on the road that is parallel to the runway. Follow it until you see the two hangars on the left. The second will contain a Dodo.

Flying: These directions are for use with the left thumbstick. First, get on the runway, start moving, and then hold down. When you see sparks emerge from the bottom, let go of the stick and don't press up. Now, hold left or right on the right thumbstick for a side view and keep tapping down to keep the Dodo level. This should cause you to rise from the ground and, most importantly, be level. You must continually press the right trigger to maintain altitude. If you lose altitude, don't worry too much as you will most likely catch a draft, causing you to rise again. Also, if your Dodo shimmers, it is because of the wind; tap left and right to regain stability. When you wish to turn the Dodo, there are a few things to keep in mind. First, you must know that it can't be turned quickly: holding left or right in one direction will cause you to spin out. Rather, you will need to give yourself a lot of time to turn slowly; this is done by tapping a lot in one direction. If you tap too much, simply tap in the opposite direction to regain stability. When you wish to gain altitude, hold up for two seconds, and then immediately press down to level off. This is great when you want to avoid a building or tower. Be warned: if you try holding up for too long, you will stall and lose quite a bit of altitude. A safer way of gaining altitude is to fly around the coast of the islands. As you do so, you will constantly get higher. Just press down to level off.

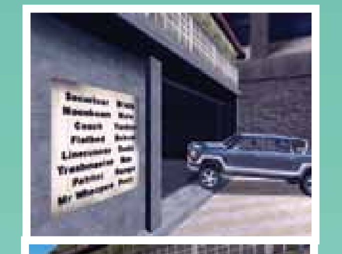




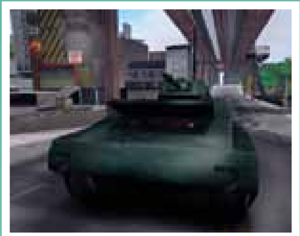
Landing: First, let go of the gas and stabilize your craft, so that it's not shaking. Hold up, so the nose is about 45 degrees to the ground; tap to maintain this angle. The Dodo's rear wheels will eventually touch ground; hold L-Trigger and B to stop.

2 Secret Garage of Cars

There is a garage with a list of cars on its side. Enter the garage with a listed car, and it will be crossed off. You will be able to return to this garage and grab any car. To get here from Wichita Gardens, head straight out to the street. Grab a car and go to the right. Go through the parking lot over the ramp. Go up the winding hill. At the stoplight, go right. When you hit the tunnel, go left. At the next stoplight, go right up the hill and then left over the dam. Once you get to the street, turn left. At the first corner, you'll find the entrance to the garage area on the right.







3 Score the Tank Anytime

Do you really want to work to get the Rhino tank? You'd have to spend hours beating the game or engage in a near-impossible battle with Johnny Law to acquire this devastating piece of rolling armor. So do it the easy way: cheat! Anytime during gameplay, enter the following button sequence: B, B, B, B, B, B, RIGHT TRIGGER, WHITE, LEFT TRIGGER, Y, B, Y. Rock n' roll!

4 Store More Cars In The Garage

This trick is possible on Staunton Island and Shoreside Vale. First, use one car to prevent the door from shutting, which means it must be sticking out of the garage. Now pack as many cars in as you can; try stacking them to optimize space. This will require some patience and tricky maneuvering on your part. If you're diligent, though, this trick will be well worth the headache.

5 Working Girl

There actually is a point to doing this, other than just having a good time. As you may already know, spending a little time with a hooker will revive and refresh you. So whenever you're low on health, find a car and stop near a hooker (they're dressed in pink and brown outfits). She will approach, speak, and then jump in. Now have a good time and your health will be replenished. However, you will lose a little money for every second you spend with her, although you won't lose that much. Still, if you'd rather not waste the bones, simply beat her up and steal back your earnings. Also note that you should use a decent-looking car to pick one up; they tend to ignore vans, cop cars, taxis, etc. Finally, if you pick a hooker up in a convertible and drive to a secluded area, you will immediately obtain 125 health points and save dinero!





■ **SUBSCRIBER BONUS:** Check this very issue for a giant double-sided poster full of glorious maps, strategies, and all the goodies you need. Only for our loyal subscribers.

■ **GOING CLUBBING:** One of the more entertaining missions in *Vice City* has you taking to the links to beat down a country club goer with, appropriately, a golf club.

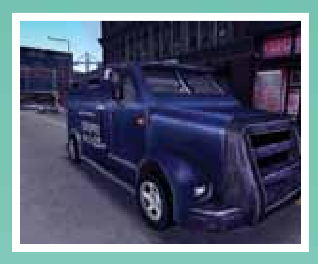
6 Bulletproof Cars

Cheetah: You will find this bulletproof Ferrari Testarossa-esque supercar in Portland during the Turismo mission. First, get yourself two tanks with the tank cheat. Park them on the road just outside of your hideout on the far side of the



entrance from the intersection just down the street. Start the mission; head to the starting line and just tap a Cheetah with your vehicle, which starts the race immediately. Rush back to your hideout and wait. After a little time passes, the Cheetahs will come roaring down the street. They will smash into your tanks, and one will likely fall into your hideout. Once all three have hit your tanks, drive into the hideout and make the Cheetah explode. Use your tank to push the destroyed Cheetah into your garage. Once you have any large part of the Cheetah inside your garage, do not get out of the tank (pull away), or let it out of your sights. If you do, the Cheetah will disappear. You will now get a message indicating that you cannot fit more than one car in the garage. Now, get out of your car and check the garage; you'll have a brand new Cheetah!

Securicar: You get this in Portland during the Van Heist mission. Ram the car until the driver exits and take it back to the garage in Staunton. Find a way to hop the gap over the bridge. Park it in the garage and make it

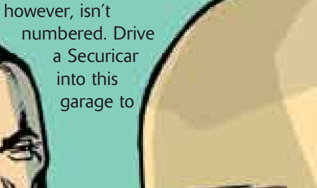


explode so that you fail the mission. Make sure that when you do cause it to explode, you don't inadvertently knock it out of the garage. Leave the garage after you fail and return.



Bobcat: You obtain the Bobcat on Staunton Island during the Evidence Dash mission. First, find yourself a very large truck (a Tank or Barracks OL will work). Then find the Bobcat and ram it until it flips onto its top. Now push it all the way back to the garage and use the same method as the previous cars. Be careful, though; if it goes off screen for too long, the Bobcat disappears.





7 Securicar Garage

There is a separate garage besides the import/export building in Portland. When you enter the docks, there will be three cars, including a Kuruma. Directly in the rear of the Kuruma, there will be some blue garages that are numbered. The second one, however, isn't numbered. Drive a Securicar into this garage to get $50K. Unfortunately, for each delivery you make thereafter, you'll receive $5K less.

8 Special Missions

Ambulance Missions: Just pick up passengers and drop them off at the hospital. Be careful when driving,



though. After you save 50 patients, you will find an Adrenaline pill at your hideout. Note that the injured can only enter your ambulance from the right side. If you complete level 12, you can obtain Infinite Run!

Fire Truck Missions: Get a fire truck and begin the mission. You simply



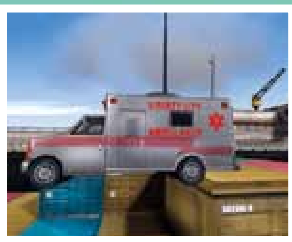
need to find fires and extinguish them in a certain amount of time. Click the right thumbstick to spray water on the various cars. However, be careful not to exit the truck, as this will end the mission. If you manage to put out all 60 fires in all three areas, you can earn a flamethrower at your hideout. There are three fire truck locations; one for each section of the city.

Portland: Take your first left coming south from the Porter Tunnel

Staunton Island: You'll find it on the east highway opposite the shoreline of Shoreside Vale.

Shoreside Vale: Take the street that goes towards the airport. You will see the truck on the left, opposite the airport parking lot.

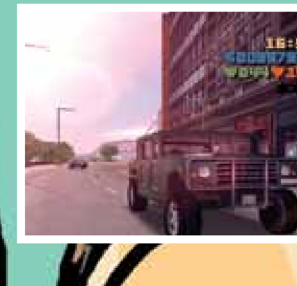
Vehicle Crane Missions: This mission will be tedious, but well worth the effort for the rewards. Eventually,



the game tells you that you can use the crane to grab emergency vehicles for cash. Each time you get a vehicle, take it to the Portland docks and park it under the magnet. You will receive $1,500 for each vehicle you take there; if you can get all seven, you will get $200,000, plus pick-ups for each. Also, you can return to the crane anytime and get any of these vehicles for use. The seven necessary vehicles are as follows: Police Car, Enforcer, Fire Truck, Ambulance, Rhino, FBI Car, and Barracks OL.

9 Car Surfing

Either jump on top of a car stopped at a red light, or stand in the middle of the street and wait for a car to stop, and then jump on top of it. You shouldn't have too much trouble staying on top, although at times you'll certainly slide off. Once on top, open fire and let the car take you all over the city. If you want the car to speed up, let off a few rounds on the car you're riding. Just for fun, try experimenting on a variety of cars like police cruisers and gang cars. It's not much of a secret, but nevertheless a fun thing to do.





10 Get all 100 Hidden Packages

PORTLAND

1. Head north, and go on to Harwood to the end of the path.
2. Jump off of the tracks to get on to the roof of Head Radio Station.
3. Go to St. Mark's get on top of the Amco Gas Station via the street walls.
4. Go inside the Easy Credit Autos of St. Marks.
5. In Salvatore's Mansion.
6. Go to Portland beach just under Salvatore's Mansion Balcony.
7. Behind the building in Hepburn Heights Towers.
8. Near the phone in the El Burro parking lot.
9. In between two trees in Hepburn Heights.
10. One block south of the Amco, there's a small parking lot. Use the driveway to reach the area.
11. There is rubble and potholes by some buildings in St. Mark's. Climb it.
12. Head to the Park in St. Marks'. It is near the back wall.
13. Go to Luigi's Sex Club 7, and head to the roof. Go one roof west.
14. In same area as number 13.
15. Go up some stairs in an alley opposite of Joey's Sex Club.
16. In the middle level of the Chinatown subway, there are some bathrooms.
17. Inside the Rush construction in the red light district.
18. Head to the alley in St. Mark's.
19. It is in the Tramp tunnel in St. Mark's, near 8-ball's.
20. Jump from the train tracks to reach the roof of the Supa Save in Portland.
21. Go to the back alley of Hong Hung in Chinatown.
22. Use the stairs to get to the roof of Chinatown.
23. Head to the back alley of the Roast Peking Duck.
24. Enter the gates of Bitch 'N' Dog Food factory in Trenton.
25. Reach the roof of the Liberty Pharmaceutical company in Trenton.
26. Head to those Portland docks. Get to the roof by using the stairs of the Colombian ship. Jump to the awning on the next building. Get on the roof.
27. In a yard in Trenton. Use the ramp to here.
28. Go behind the fence in the front of Joey's Garage.
29. Go behind the cement fence facing the mill in Callahan Point.
30. Head to the roof of the Sawmill in Trenton. Get up to it by the dirt ramp.
31. Go behind the Turtle Head Fish Company. You must have the Fish Van or Garbage Truck to enter.
32. Go to the end of the paved pier in Atlantic Quays.
33. To the south of Portland, there is an Island you need to reach. You must have the boat to get here.

STAUNTON ISLAND

34. Go to the Army Surplus Store. It is between the garage and the sea wall.
35. Head to the Coliseum. It is behind the rock sign.
36. This one is one the top of the hospital.
37. Go to the entrance of the Stadium.
38. Go to the east side of the University.
39. Go to the construction site and go to the second level room inside the building.
40. Use the steel beams to get to the top of the small Bridge.
41. Enter the Colombian garage.
42. Enter the construction site.
43. Go to 8-Ball's area. There is a garage next to a carpark containing a package.
44. Head to the second floor of the carpark.
45. Go to the alley by BJ's Deli & Grocery.
46. Jump off of the winding bridge to the rooftop.
47. Under the road tunnel near a ramp.
48. Go to the basketball court.
49. Go to the center of the median on the drawbridge.
50. Go beneath the bridge of the park.
51. Go to the end of the south dock.
52. Head to the alley next to Callahan Bridge in Newport.
53. Go to the top of the stairs at the museum.
54. Jump from the pier that is south of Callahan Bridge.
55. Go behind the Police Station to the back parking lot.
56. Go to the street leading up to the police station.
57. Simply go behind the church.
58. End of an alley that is quite oddly shaped.
59. Head to the underground parking lot of Amco.
60. Head back to the Amco rooftop.
61. Go up the stairs of the glass building in Bedford Point.
62. There is a doorway facing an intersection, to the west of number 61.
63. Go to the rooftop in the projects.
64. Look behind the rocks on the pavement near the pier.
65. Go to the projects and behind a building to the south of number 62.
66. Head to the underground car park.
67. Go to the top of the walkway, which is to the south of number 65.
68. Behind the Star Statue.
69. Head to the rooftop of the Casino.

SHORESIDE VALE

70. Head to the west part of the dam.
71. Go to the east part of the dam.
72. Go to Tower 1 of the dam.
73. Go to the helipad in the lower dam.
74. Go to the corner of the dam behind the boulder.
75. Behind the house furthest west.
76. Go to the porch of the house that is the third most west.
77. Go to the porch that is east of the house in number 76.
78. Go to the swimming pool in the Colombian mansion.
79. Go to the picnic tables to find this one.
80. Fall to the roof of the Fudge Factory from the cement walls.
81. Look inside the overpass of Cedar Grove.
82. Go to the rooftop of the police station.
83. Go to Pike Creek behind the building with oil drums.
84. Look behind the billboard near the hideout.
85. Go to the entrance of the Apartments.
86. Look in between these apartments.
87. Look on top of the blue container that lies east of the hospital.
88. Now go and look behind the hospital.
89. Go to the roof of the large building with a strange awning. Jump to its roof from the opposite building.
90. Go to Pike Creek and look between garage and wall in Turtle Head Storage.
91. Look under the wooden bridge at the Gardens.
92. Go to the area across the airport parking lot.
93. Under the wing of the plane in a hangar.
94. Look on the ground near the dome at the airport.
95. Look under a plane at the airport.
96. Go to the front of the airport and look between it and the billboards.
97. Go to the bottom level of the subway.
98. Go to the helipad of the airport.
99. Head to the airport runway near the water.
100. Finally, head to the end of the runway.

■ **THE NEXT GTA?:** The next *GTA* game will come out at the end of 2004 and as far as we know it will be exclusive to the PlayStation2.... but that hasn't been said officially yet.

■ **OLD SCHOOL:** The original *Grand Theft Auto* shipped for the PC in 1998 (in the US).





Tips, Cheats, and Insider Secrets

Perhaps the greatest thing about Vice City is it's massive and open-ended enough so that each player's experience can be different. There are so many methods to the madness that only a few rules apply in most or all situations. We've got great ways to bend these rules: some devious expert tips and lots of creative codes. We've also uncovered plenty of secrets.

TOMMY IN GENERAL

You'll get to know and love wise guy Tommy Vercetti from the get-go, so why not learn some tricks to help keep him alive, dress him up as nearly all the characters in the game, and, in one case, kill him instantly?

Vigilante Ante
Make sure to take time for odd jobs and vigilante missions, as they grant your character assets and advantages.

Healthy Saves
Aside from all the health lying around Vice City, home is truly where the heart is. When you've lost HP, go to your game save locations and make contact with the save icon. After you either save or cancel, your health will be restored.

Wanted Man
The save icon can also get you out of jams. As long as you're not in the middle of a mission, you can overwrite save files. Load that most recent save and your wanted level will drop to zero. Your home bases will also provide you with a change of clothes that will erase wanted levels of two or below. Best of all, there are plenty of Pay 'N Sprays.

Tap and Run
Interestingly, the more running you do throughout the game, the more Tommy can keep sprinting at any one time. Another way to help maintain your sprint is tapping A to the beat of a steady pulse instead of holding down the button until Tommy is exhausted.

WEAPONS

Effective use of weapons is key to making it through many of *Vice City*'s greatest challenges. There are nine weapon slots (not counting the "Martha's Mug Shot" camera), and there are several gradations of power with weapons in each slot. We recommend toying around with various weapons to complete missions. Try it out during "Jury Fury."

TIPS

The Right to Bear Arms, For Free
There are tons of free weapons located throughout the city. Brass knuckles are located behind the Moonlight Hotel on Ocean Drive or on bouncers at The Malibu; the chainsaw is inside the apartment building next to the Ocean Beach Pay 'N Spray; find Molotov cocktails in front of downtown's Tacopalypse; the Colt python is behind a building in west Little Haiti near the red bridge; look for a PSG-1 sniper rifle on a Kaufman Cab billboard's ledge in Little Havana; and the rocket launcher is behind the Hooker Hotel near the airport.

Toggle Targets
The Colt python is perhaps the most effective weapon in the game, as it is a one-shot one-kill gun. Although you can't run with it, try using the python's simple lock-on mechanics. Hold left trigger and press left or right on the D-pad to cycle between targets in your field of view.

Shooting Duck
Click the left thumbstick to crouch. This is useful for hiding behind ledges or walls. After pressing left thumbstick, if you hold left trigger and press right trigger with certain weapons equipped, Tommy will stand and shoot the target. He will crouch again automatically as soon as you release.

Cocked Punch
For some really good fun at others' expense, try running around and holding right trigger. Tommy will cock his arm back, ready to punch. Release right trigger when you're close to pedestrians or cops and get them chasing after you. Now try this with the Katana…

Ammo Sharing
There are four weapons in the Uzi slot, which is used for drive-bys: TEC-9, Ingram MAC, Uzi 9MM and the MP5. Interestingly, all of these weapons share the same ammo. A good idea is to stock up on the ammo of a lesser gun (the first three) at Ammu-Nation or hidden locations.

Grand Theft Auto: Vice City codes!

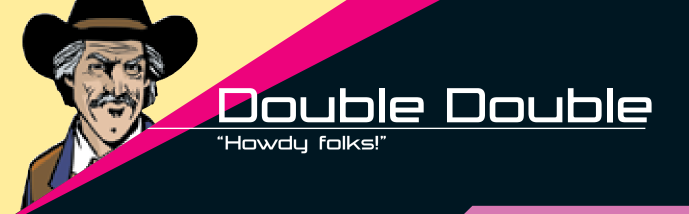
You've got plenty to do in *Vice City,* so here are just a couple of cheats to give you a taste of what we have coming up for you next month when we crack open the cheater's vault.

Cars can fly
D-pad Right - BLACK - B - RIGHT TRIGGER - WHITE - D-Pad Down - LEFT TRIGGER - RIGHT TRIGGER

Player is given a bunch of weapons (thug style)
RIGHT TRIGGER - BLACK - LEFT TRIGGER - BLACK - D-pad LEFT, D-pad DOWN, D-pad RIGHT, D-pad UP - D-pad LEFT, D-pad DOWN, D-pad RIGHT, D-pad UP



■ **SCOTTISH GREATS:** The Rockstar North team hails from Scotland, as does our own Frank O'Connor. Word to the wise: don't call them British.



Double Double

"Howdy folks!"

VEHICLES

Getting around on foot is for suckers. There is tons of fun to be had with other people's rides, and there are more types of vehicles in Vice City than in Liberty City, including motorcycles, helicopters, planes (that really fly), and a greater variety of boats and autos, all yours for the taking.

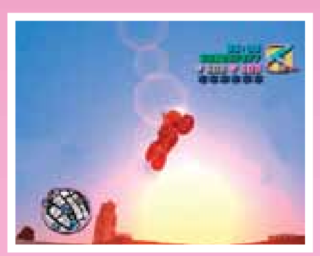
The Hunter Hunted

There's been great debate on the best way to steal the "Hunter" (an Apache attack chopper, your reward for finding all 100 hidden packages) from Fort Baxter. We've found several solutions to this problem. The easiest seems to be using a chopper to land in between the Hunter and troops at the base: Their view of the Hunter is blocked, and they won't fire on your original chopper because you're not in it. Riskier ways include engaging the enemy from the rooftops or using the blades of the first chopper to dice the troops. But keep in mind you can simply waltz into the base with a cop's uniform on, in which case you won't be fired upon. Be sure to snag the 5-0's brown duds from the locker room in the Washington Beach Police Station after you complete the "Copland" mission. By the way, we highly recommend using the Hunter for the police vigilante missions. You can easily reach level 50 and higher, making tens of thousands of dollars per level completed. Pass level 12 and get 150 max armor.



Crotch Rocket

Be sure to use the PCJ 600 for unique jumps. It can fit through tight spaces and has the best acceleration: Hold on B (the handbrake) or left trigger and rev the engine, and release the brake to accelerate in a short distance. Also, if you slightly press forward on a PCJ (or other motorcycle) Tommy leans forward and his position is a bit more aerodynamic, slightly increasing speed. Surely by now you know that most motorcycles can pop wheelies and do "stoppies." But have you tried doing a wheelie and rolling over cars? A good place to always find a PCJ is on Ocean Drive, near the Colonel's yacht, and in Howlin' Pete's shop across from the downtown biker bar (just break the glass).



Faggio Not So Saggio

Faggios may be the weakest thing in the whole game, except in one respect. You can do a hell of a stoppie on a moped. Build up what little speed you can, hold left trigger and right trigger while pressing forward. As you start leaning forward, release right trigger and tap B. The Faggio will start accelerating and moving while holding a stoppie until you lose control.

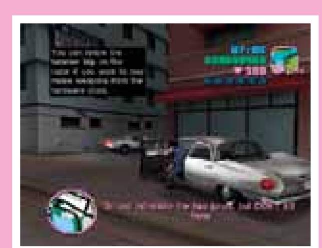
Help with the Whirly Birds

Contrary to popular belief, you can indeed do a drive-by in a chopper; you just can't see what you're shooting. Select the "cinematic" viewpoint by pressing the white button and use right or left on the right thumbstick to look and click the right stick to fire. Click the left thumbstick to hover, or to slow down quickly.



Vehicles, No Money Down

In addition to the locations for PCJ 600's, it's good to know where you can find both fast and strong cars. You can always find an Infernus at the North Point Mall garage or on Starfish Island. And look for a Patriot (a.k.a. Hummer) at Prawn Island's Film Studio or at Phil's in Little Haiti. After you complete Steve Scott's tasks, you'll find the Skimmer (an operable plane) parked near the Prawn Island Bridge.



The Getaway

If you know you have to make a quick getaway, hold left when you exit the car (pressing Y). This keeps the door open, allowing you to take less time to get back in the car during your escape.

Mmmm, Donuts

To do perfect donuts in any vehicle with wheels, stop and then hold both left trigger and right trigger while pressing left or right. A protractor couldn't do it any better.

New Mission Directives

In "Guardian Angel," you can purposefully fail the mission and take home the bulletproof Admiral to keep as your own. Similarly, beat Hilary in the race of "The Driver" and wait at The Malibu until you see the bulletproof Sabre Turbo crash into the wall. Take it to a garage, but make sure you push it in rather than drive it (otherwise it might disappear). Try finding a way around the self-destruct timer for the tank in "Sir, Yes Sir."

Hit the Switches!

Hydraulics aren't only for cabs. Go to Little Haiti and relieve someone of their old-school Voodoo (there's often one near Auntie Poulet's). Click the left thumbstick and then control the hydraulics with your right analog stick.

Another One Rides the Bus

If you want to make money the slow and painful way, you can jack a bus and do the bus route. Look for bus stop signs and you'll get five bucks a pop for taking on passengers.





■ **RUMOR:** The next *GTA* (which could hit the Xbox in 2005) is rumored to take place in the San Francisco-inspired San Andreas. This is pure rumor. Ru-mor. OK?



VICE CITY SECRETS

Simply put, Rockstar North has a very cheeky and bawdy sense of humor. *Vice City* is packed to the hilt with in-jokes, references to Rockstar and the *Grand Theft Auto* series, and innumerable jabs poking fun at something or someone. Here is but a short list of the things waiting to be found.

THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN VICE CITY

Home-Base Hero

Some of the greatest mementos from *Vice City* can be found right at home, provided that you've progressed through a large portion of the game. Clearly, the Ocean View Hotel and Starfish Island Mansion are your two most prevalent home bases, so they are the best places to look. In the Ocean View you will eventually be able to find barrels of Phil's boomshine, a "headshot" trophy from the shooting range, a hidden package broken open, and two large posters of Candy Suxxx and Steve Scott's very tasty high-art films, *Closer Encounters* and *Bite* (the one for which you littered Vice City with flyers). Take a closer look at the coffee table, and you'll see spoofs of *Time* magazine (*Crime* magazine has a picture of Diaz) and *ERSE*, a play on *EDGE*, the UK gaming magazine. At the Mansion, you'll find various trophies from events at Hyman Stadium, the shooting range, and some very risqué pictures and a poster of Candy Suxxx. While you're there, don't forget to notice how the mansion falls into disrepair: There are pizza boxes and bottles everywhere, the paintings are all off-kilter, and someone has drawn a mustache and horns on an old picture of Diaz.

Memories of Candy

Speaking of things like the movie *Bite*, be certain to finish Steve Scott's missions, after which, with a little patience, you can eventually track down a large, inanimate shark trolling around in the waters of Vice City – it's just like the one on the set at InterGlobal Films. And thanks to you, there will be *Bite* flyers literally everywhere. There are also some very naughty black-and-white and color photos of Candy in your mansion. And every night you can see your handiwork from the "G-Spotlight" mission downtown. Yowzaa!

New Acts at Pole Position

We couldn't help but notice that there is a different stripper in the first room in the back hallway after you first buy the place. Be sure to spend $600 on each stripper. Much to our surprise, another act with a woman wearing a white cowboy hat (who doesn't charge you) will eventually perform. There are several unopened doors at the Pole Position, which forever begs the question of whether there are things you can do to unlock them…

Devil Moon

You'll notice that the moon can be bigger on some nights than others. Well, you can have control over exactly how big you'd like it to be. Simply take out your PSG-1 and snipe it until it reaches the size you prefer. Sniping also changes the size of some garbage bags.

Thor's Hotline

We can't help but listen to talk shows on the radio over and over. We've heard Thor's ramblings too many times to count until it dawned on us that we ought to actually call the number he mentions: 866-PILLAGE. Sure enough, you can call it and hear Thor talk about a broad range of topics, and no, it doesn't really cost you $175.

Beach Ball Mini-Game

At a pool on Starfish Island you can consistently find, of all things, a beach ball (we've also seen it in the sand dunes at the golf course and on Ocean Beach). If you run into the beach ball it will rise in the air. Stand in the ball's shadow as it falls and it will bounce off your head. A number will float above your head for each time you bounce it, something of a mini-game. We're not yet sure what the reward is for this…

Rockstars, Literally

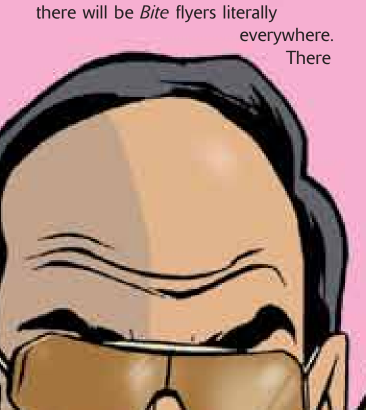
You've seen the Rockstar logo on several billboards, but you've probably never noticed that it is a constellation. When the night is darkest, look to the eastern sky and you'll see a giant R with a very bright star at the lower right of the letter. Shameless, and crass…

GTA References

In addition to the classic advertisement poster of *GTA III* in your Ocean View Hotel room, you can find screens of the original *GTA* behind the counter at the Tarbrush Café in North Point Mall. Take a closer look inside InterGlobal Films and you'll find pieces of sets that will remind you of Bolt Burgers and portions of the Red Light District from *Grand Theft Auto III*. Look on the walls of a store called "Rockstar Video Games" just up the road from Pole Position and you'll see familiar faces from character art of *GTA III*.

Pogo the Monkey Arcade!

We loved the *Pogo the Monkey* radio ads from *GTA III*. In *Vice City*, you can find at least two *Pogo the Monkey* arcade machines (the game looks like a *Mario* rip-off), and they actually play a song! Go to the pizza place and Kaufman Cab Co. in Little Haiti. At *Pogo*'s side you'll also find two *Degenetron* arcade machines, the games of which are described on some Vice City radio spots.





■ **WHAT ABOUT LATER?:** Many *GTA* fans (including us) are clamoring for an online version of *GTA*. We say, don't hold your breath until the next round of consoles.



Double Double

Places to see, people to jack

FUN WITH GLITCHES

■ Jump from the top of the spiral stairs inside the lighthouse and a *Matrix*-style time stoppage will happen before you fall. Once on the ground, look up in first-person and rotate the view. Try not to get sick, and be sure to show this to especially queasy friends.

■ Stand in front of an oncoming car and snipe the head of a driver. Get in on the passenger's side and watch the driver rise from the dead.

■ Scare people into the water on the docks by the lighthouse. When you snipe the floating bodies, they sometimes levitate or roll over and sink. See if you can make some sort of decorative levitating cadaver collection.

■ Jump from a rooftop onto pedestrians below and you can stand on their heads. Now see how long you can surf their heads.

■ Jack a car with a passenger and take it to the stairs of the downtown VCPD helipad. When you stop the car the NPC will go crazy and start running into the wall. Insanity = funny.





CHARACTERS AND ENVIRONMENT

Vice City is one of the most organic game worlds yet created. And again, Rockstar designed Vice City to be customized. Part of your overall experience should be to see how the game world exists on its own and, more importantly, how it reacts to you.

Eavesdropping and People Watching

The behaviors of non-player characters (NPCs) are often hilarious. Be sure to try listening in on their conversations. Literally thousands of lines of dialogue have been recorded to flesh out both this game's story and the behavior of its citizens. Generally, our favorite place to catch an earful is along Ocean Drive near the lighthouse during the day. NPCs will marvel at an explosion or when someone has been run over. Cause these and other events and listen to their reactions. In crowded areas, like the mall or The Malibu, you can stir up a lot of chaos and watch big crowds duke it out in small riots. Make sure to check out your options in customizing the NPCs.

VICE CITY POINTS OF INTEREST

■ Watch the skyscrapers just north of The Malibu, oh, around 23:00. You'll see what we mean.

■ *Scarface* was a huge inspiration for *Vice City* (you may remember the *Scarface* soundtrack comprised one of the stations in *GTA 3*). The bloody bathroom where you find the chainsaw and the Starfish Island Mansion (especially all the monitors) are straight out of the movie.

■ Northeast of Little Haiti's Café Under The Tree is the "Fudge Packing Corp."

■ Around the docks are Securicars for the company "Gruppe Sechs." In German it means Group Six, but sound that out U.S.-style. Rip off the back doors and you'll find "loot."

■ Look in the tollbooth at InterGlobal Films for some raunchy posters. On the outside walls find the posters for Boy Scout Zombies and The Hairy Beast From Hell and what looks like Bonera.

■ Fly a chopper over Starfish Island mansions. One of them on the northern end has a pool that looks like a woman in a bikini.

■ If you can wait long enough, in the waters around Vice City you might eventually see schools of fish, turtles, and, again, Steve Scott's shark. If you take a boat south of the two ocean freighters, you'll see another freighter sunken beneath the water.

■ Be prepared if you agitate any female bartenders in Pole Position or The Malibu.

■ Try sniping seagulls and "feeding fish." There are stats for each.







■ **REAL LIFE LIBERTY CITY:** Rockstar's secret San Francisco office is located in an area that looks suspiciously like part of Portland in *GTA 3*.

Previews

Now with 100% more stealth



■ Take your act underground in *Pandora Tomorrow*'s online multiplayer mode.

"If you feel a little jiggle in the controller, it means you're dangerously close to a land mine."

Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow

Get your sneaking shoes back on

PUBLISHER **UBISOFT** | DEVELOPER **UBISOFT** | RELEASE DATE **MARCH 2004**

You are Sam Fisher, an elite mission operative with superior skills at infiltrating enemy headquarters while remaining undetected. You have dozens of high-tech tools on your side, but no companions to rely on. You are an army of one.

You find yourself on a train carrying both innocent civilians and enemy agents. You must carry out your mission, but you must also remain in the shadows. You'll grapple on the undercarriage of the train, use your optical cables to peek through doorways and trapdoors, and rely on darkness to cloak your every move. Inside the train, you'll hug walls, then execute a blink-of-an-eye swim move past open doorways so that the occupants inside will mistake your slippery shadow for a passing building outside the train playing tricks on their eyes.

But you'll find yourself often outside the train, clinging to the side of each passenger car, waiting for the right moment to slink past the windows in order to keep from alerting the civilians inside. There's one girl who is content to merely stare outside at the passing scenery, so you'll have to wait for her to glance away before you scurry past.

This is *Pandora Tomorrow*, the upcoming sequel to the game that redefined virtual stealth, *Splinter Cell*. And though you'll find Sam Fisher is again embroiled in a complicated geo-political web, Ubisoft refuses to merely recycle the original. Instead, as Sam, you'll discover you've got a bevy of new abilities, gadgets, and gameplay elements to help you through a tougher but more expansive set of missions in the single-player adventure. For those who thought that this was going to simply be an online game with just a few new single-player bits thrown into the mix, you're wrong.



■ Shimmying across the outside of a train is just one new thrill in *Pandora*.

For instance, you'll be transported to wide-open areas like the jungles of Indonesia where landmines riddle the landscape. How do you avoid becoming fodder? By relying on your controller's vibration feedback. If you feel a little jiggle on the controller, this means you're dangerously near a mine. You'll also have to rely on your new-fangled camouflage suit to keep you hidden among the jungle grass as you sneak into the enemy's encampment.

Among the other new additions, you'll also have to utilize your nifty split jump in more situations. Sam's acrobatic jump has also been slightly modified to make it necessary to split jump in order to reach certain areas. Among Sam's new weapons is an improved FN7 pistol. Now equipped with a laser sight, the pistol's accuracy is much improved, but it's cleverly balanced by allowing enemies to detect when they're being targeted. Therefore, you'll have to decide whether to take a shot that may or may not hit your target, or to fire a guaranteed shot that has to be done quickly before the enemy even has a chance to react to your laser sight.

But the biggest addition is, of course, online play. While Ubisoft has yet to unveil all the different modes available, the most intriguing will most likely be the Mercenary Versus Spy option. Allowing up to four players to compete online in this mode pits a variable number of mercenaries versus a variable number of spies. As a spy, you'll guide your character in third-person view to nab information off a computer in the mercenaries' headquarters. As a mercenary, you'll play the game in first-person mode, equipped with all manner of tools to smoke out the spies. With new vision modes like motion tracking devices, the ability to set mines as traps, and an EMF (electro-magnetic field) detector, you may think you have it made against the spies, but you don't necessarily. In first-person view, the tension is heightened to record levels as you'll be in clear view of the spies with your helmet torchlight beaming in the dark. You'll have to use your tools wisely in order to defend your homebase. The result is incredibly promising.

While much of the game remains to be revealed, there's no doubt that the end product is set to match and most likely surpass the original in every way. Expect even more *Pandora* in upcoming issues.

– Francesca Reyes

ON THE GAME DISC video

■ First-person view in multiplayer should make for some really tense moments.

■ Your laser sight will attract attention, so you must be careful using it.

■ Enter motion tracking vision! If something moves, it'll show up in little boxes for convenient shooting.

■ Thermo-vision makes a return and remains completely essential to your success.

More online tidbits

■ Think you've seen it all in the single-player mode of *Pandora Tomorrow*? Think again. There's an actual story that plays out in the online mode of *Pandora* that will



directly tie into the main game. Though you won't have to play online to resolve stuff from the offline story, you'll get a more complete picture of Sam's world if you do.

■ The Communicator on Xbox Live will allow you to chat with your teammates, and also – on special "occasions" – your captive enemies. If you grab an enemy from behind, you'll be able to taunt him accordingly through your headset. Expect lots of trash talking.

■ Your vast inventory can be selected on the fly via an onscreen, scroll-able menu so you won't have to pause the game.

■ When downed, mercenaries are only out of the game for a short period of time before they revive where they left off, while spies, when killed, must respawn at the starting area.

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD
- Even more visual bells and whistles than the original
- Online?! Sold!
- New gadgets, new abilities, and five different massive locations

NEEDS WORK
- Only four players allowed in the Mercs Vs. Spies? Sheesh
- Will the first-person mercs and third-person spies thing gel well?

FINAL THOUGHTS
This is a big one. With all the new goodies and a full online game attached, it's like two full adventures in one handy package. And you certainly could not beat that with a stick even if you tried.

■ **LEVEL OF ALERT:** To make it tougher, when you're detected, enemies will don a flak jacket at stage one of alert, then put on a helmet at the second stage. No more simple kills for you, Sam.

■ **INTERNATIONAL CONCEPTS:** Rather than hand the reins back to Ubisoft's Montreal studio for *Pandora*, Ubi's Shanghai and Montpelier (France) studios are now in charge.



Expect plenty of eye-candy moments.

Boss battles are back and in fine form as you'll face off against Dr. Robotnik and his evil hordes in various guises.

Sonic Heroes

Xbox finally sees blue

PUBLISHER **SEGA** | DEVELOPER **SONIC TEAM** | RELEASE DATE **JANUARY 2004**

When Sega took on the role of third-party developer and publisher, there were certain titles that seemed destined to remain the domain of specific consoles. Sega's speedy-sneakered mascot Sonic seemed like he wouldn't budge past GameCube's line in the sand – until now.

Sonic Heroes marks the hedgehog's debut on Xbox, and it's a fast-paced, team-style debut at that. Rather than opt for the solo-type of gameplay from the *Sonic Adventure* series, *Sonic Heroes* has the player choose from four different teams of three *Sonic* characters: Team Sonic, Team Dark, Team Rose, or Team Chaotix. Each team includes three different traits: flying, power, and speed. To use Team Sonic as an example, Sonic is speed, Knuckles has power, and Tails can fly. This is important because each massive stage has areas that play to each team's different skills. For instance, one area requires power to smack down enemies, while another is for flying.

Although all four teams share these three abilities, not all of the teams are created "equal," so to speak. Your choice between teams will dictate your gameplay experience in that playing Team Dark's game is geared for advanced gamers, while Team Rose's adventure is measurably easier and more straightforward, making it perfect for younger players. Sega is aiming for four markedly different experiences across many of the same levels. And into this single-player mix, Sega has also added two-player competitive modes that span from action races (initially playable) to six others which are unlocked.

Heroes' gameplay also marks a return to Sonic's trademark zippy pace, as well. If you play through the game as either Team Sonic or Team Dark, you'll race through Robotnik-infested beaches to giant pinball machines all populated with speedy loops that send you hurtling through the air towards distant targets. But beyond the speed factor, Sega has also included multiple paths that differ depending on what character you're using at the time, and special stages that reward you for finding keys. With a successful animated series airing on Fox and *Sonic Heroes* ready for release in January, will Sega's blue wonder strike gold again? We hope so.

– Francesca Reyes

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD	NEEDS WORK
Fast, *Sonic*-style action A bit deeper than previous *Sonic Adventure* titles Plenty of gameplay variations between teams	Switching between characters on the fly can be a little confusing at first Balance between speed and other traits is a little rough in early versions

FINAL THOUGHTS
Sonic's transition into 3D gameplay hasn't always been as smooth and successful as fans would like it to be, but *Heroes* aims to be as true to the blue guy's roots as possible.

BANDING TOGETHER: Some internal mergers between development teams within Sega has paired Sonic Team with another creative group, UGA, responsible for *Space Channel 5* and *Rez*.



A mix of sci-fi and supernatural elements makes for a cool plot.

Guess what! This guy is NOT your friend! Shoot and punch him!

Breakdown

Finally, we can reveal exactly what the heck Breakdown is...

PUBLISHER **NAMCO** | DEVELOPER **NAMCO** | RELEASE DATE **Q1 2004**

Early screenshots of *Breakdown* left us with few clues about what game genre it actually slotted into. Was it a 3D beat-'em-up in the mold of SNK's *Super Spy*? Was it a graphic adventure with a first-person perspective? For all we knew, it could have been an action-oriented RPG. Well, we've played it, and the good news is that it's a straight-up, action-packed, incredibly visceral shooter, with hues of *Halo* and *Half-Life*, and just a glimmer of *Tekken* to spice things up a bit.

The game's most original feature is its 100% reliance on first-person. Slavish, you might call it. In the game's opening moments, you're treated to the questionable spectacle of first-person vomit, complete with alpha-blended layers to enhance the realism of the carrots and other assorted ex-snacks that heave out of your first-person throat.

The perspective makes more sense for shooting – and there's tons of that – but there's also a story. The plot has you struggling to remember your identity as a sci-fi conspiracy unravels around you. Rescued by the mysterious (and mysteriously sexy) Alex, you find that you're capable of incredible feats of stamina and strength – the reasons for this becoming clear as the game progresses.

On the way, you'll pick up a huge assortment of weapons and ammo to blast through the rather smart AI foes, but some will have to be dispatched using an arsenal of martial arts moves – or a combination of guns and hand-to-hand combat. The unarmed stuff becomes more prevalent and powerful as you unlock more of your mysterious skills. Battles with huge boss creatures are interspersed with indoor and outdoor exploration, showing off the game's stunning graphics. Brilliantly lit and filled with Namco's gorgeous CG style, the game looks every bit as good in motion as it does in stills.

One scene has you running through the corridors of a skyscraper, trying to unlock doors as a helicopter reduces the building around you to broken glass and rubble. This scene also shows off the interaction between Alex and Derek (the game's mostly unseen protagonist) as she unlocks the doors while he (you) tries to stay alive. Even if you go along just for the graphical ride, you'll get to see the most realistic videogame chugging of soda in the history of interactive entertainment. Enough said.

– Frank O'Connor

Fists of Fury

Our hero is blessed with fists of fire, if not necessarily fury. The glowing and intricate web that criss-crosses your hand is shrouded in mystery – a plot device that becomes important later in the game, but it does help explain why you can knock out eight-foot villains with a well-placed punch. Derek can also kick, and more importantly unlock and unleash combos of both. Unlocking combos will become essential later on, as he combats bulletproof bad guys.

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD	NEEDS WORK
Namco's glorious 3D graphics get their first outing in a shooter Lots of innovative and enjoyable gameplay features An ambitious and remarkably cohesive (for a Japanese game) plot	100% first person can be gimmicky Indoor environments look great, no clue about outdoors No multiplayer game or Xbox Live features

FINAL THOUGHTS
A cool, hip, and involving take on a genre that the Japanese have traditionally ignored – but who knows? Maybe they're better at first-person shooters than some of the US guys...

NAMCO NAME GAME: Namco used to sell its PC engine (TurboGrafx in the US) titles under the name "Namcot." Why? Nobody knows.



Bad guys always seem to be near dams...

Silent Scope Complete

Giant green gun... bring it!

PUBLISHER **KONAMI** | DEVELOPER **KONAMI** | RELEASE DATE **SPRING 2004**

Konami's *Silent Scope* series has amazingly managed to dodge the bullet of controversy since it first appeared in arcades a few years ago. This is surprising given that the game features nothing but sniping. Apparently the arcades are doing so badly these days that even lazy reporters are avoiding them.

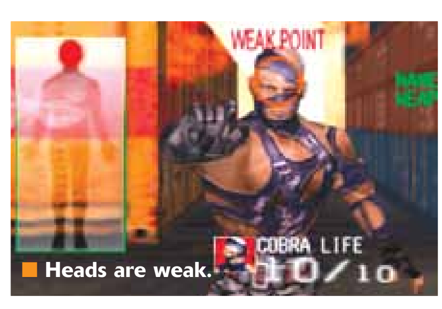
The original coin-op featured an ingenious rifle attached to the cabinet. Look through the scope and you see a suitably magnified view. Look at the screen away from the scope and you see a "spotter's" view of the whole game area. You can shoot in this unmagnified mode, but for accuracy, you of course have to zoom in.

Silent Scope Complete includes *Silent Scopes One*, *Two*, and *Three*, with some other goodies thrown in. The console version features a slightly tweaked implementation of the zoom feature – you press a button to zoom rather than looking through a sight (although as you'll see in our boxout, there is a gun peripheral on the way).

The gameplay is simple enough – you're a police sniper, given various missions from taking our terrorists on a dockyard to protecting the president. Most missions involve simply shooting or avoiding specific subjects, but the pace is shifted around with some slightly oddball missions.

Although the games are starting to show their age a little, this is a very robust and comprehensive package, and with the addition of the gun, *Silent Scope Complete* could be, well, complete.

– Frank O'Connor



Heads are weak.

GUN FUN

Konami has teamed up with Pelican Accessories to bring us a *Silent Scope* sniper rifle. Using sensors around the eyepiece, the gun interacts with the *Scope* software when you stare through the scope. The on-screen view switches to a zoom, and the effect is eerily similar to looking through a real scope. In every other regard, it's a normal light gun peripheral, but we haven't seen one as game-specific before. We tried it out briefly and the results were amazing. Basically if you're a *Silent Scope* fan, you're spending a lot of money this spring.

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD
- Smart, sharp graphics and nice animation
- Innovative gun controller that really adds to the experience

NEEDS WORK
- Without the gun controller, controls are simply adequate
- Little logical continuity between the various *Silent Scope* offerings

FINAL THOUGHTS
The *Silent Scope* series does offer a surprising amount of innovative and original gameplay in the way the challenges are set up. The difficulty level, however, is all over the place and ranges from mindless to impossible in no perceptible order. Hopefully this is something that will be tuned for the Xbox iteration.

NINTENDON'T: This sniper rifle is NOT the most impressive light gun ever. That would be the Nintendo bazooka-shaped light gun for SNES.



Aim for the face. Fast.

If Blizzard games were cars they'd have exactly 39 coats of wax on them.

Terrans can be your friends or foes.

StarCraft: Ghost

Getting deeper by the minute

PUBLISHER **VIVENDI** | DEVELOPER **BLIZZARD** | RELEASE DATE **SPRING 2004**

When we took an in-depth look at *StarCraft: Ghost* in our August issue, Blizzard's stealth-based action-adventure was coming along nicely. Nova, the game's main character, already had a huge amount of moves and abilities at her disposal, while the game's vast environments were quickly shaping into immersive challenges. But with a release date quite a ways away, Blizzard is still hard at work refining the game and adding new features. Recently, we were able to check out how the game's been coming along.

One notable addition that we were finally able to see in action was the use of several different types of mines. For instance, if you have a spider mine in your inventory, you're able to activate it. Once in use, you're able to manually control it as it scurries across the ground. Once you've placed it where you want it, you're able to detonate it using the R-trigger. This is especially useful when attempting to take out a distant object. In addition, you will also be able to utilize other types of mines, like the distract mine, which works like a decoy to attract the attention of enemies, allowing you to sneak past obstacles. There's also a detect mine that allows you to recognize cloaked objects and enemies in the area, which is vital in certain stages. Most of the non-destructible mines can also be recollected once they've been used, which is highly important in a game where resources and inventory can be hard to come by.

Other smaller additions include Nova's new ability to "shoulder-tap" the enemy as one of her melee moves. When you approach an enemy from behind, you're given a few options on how to proceed. You can simply attack them with any of Nova's lethal melee moves, or you can choose to distract them by tapping them on the shoulder. At this point, the enemy will turn around and you can either sneak off along their blind side or give them a good smack. If you knock the enemy out or kill them, you're able to throw them from a platform to the shadows below, depending on the environment you're in. If you're on a ledge or catwalk, you'll be able to toss 'em over the side to dispose of their body to avoid detection from guards.

There's simply so much stuff that Blizzard's doing to refine *Ghost* that the gameplay is becoming immeasurably deep. We're hoping that with all of the expanded elements that Nova's main adventure doesn't get too overwhelmed by the details. But with Blizzard's excellent track record, we're expecting *Ghost* to come out a winner, regardless.

– Francesca Reyes

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD
- High level of polish
- Loads of interaction with enemies and environments
- Newly expanded features add depth

NEEDS WORK
- Will the game get lost in the overwhelming number of small refinements, options, and details?

FINAL THOUGHTS
With a release date that still seems pretty far away, *Ghost* continues to amaze with its snazzy looks and high level of interaction. In a genre that continually grows more and more crowded with each passing month, *Ghost* still remains *the* stealth horse to bet on.

HACK 'N' BASH: In some areas of the game, you'll have to hack security locks in order to progress. You'll have to hack on the go, as guards and enemies will still remain active. Should be tense.



■ You can get on that ship. In fact, you can go just about anywhere.

True Fantasy Live Online

■ Battles with computer-controlled villains use the Japanese RPG style.

■ Interacting with fellow players is what the game is all about.

■ Pick a profession, such as a chef, and you can earn money for later adventures.

A fantasy no longer

PUBLISHER **MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS** | DEVELOPER **LEVEL-5** | RELEASE DATE **TBA 2004**

With its decidedly unique visual look, a host of incredible features, and a massively open world to explore, *TFLO* should be the first console online RPG that will offer gamers a living, breathing universe in which to interact with other players. The result, we're sure, will be nothing short of stunning.

But many of the details have remained vague and fuzzy until now. When starting a game, players will be able to fully customize their own character from head to toe. In fact, this is one of the elements in the game that the team is most proud of at this point – giving players the flexibility and freedom to make an avatar of their choosing. Once this is done, you'll be assigned citizenship to a specific world.

In your homeworld, you'll be able to learn skills by joining guilds – a point that Level-5 is keen on emphasizing as an important factor in the game. Joining guilds and being an active member will help you to progress your rank and level up specific skills. You'll also be granted access to otherwise secret quests once you clear certain criteria. And the quests are definitely where it's at.

Quests, which range from simple adventures to mammoth undertakings, will have different requirements. Some of them are manageable for the solo player, while others will, of course, require that you assemble a party. After all, you won't be able to take on some of the game's tough beasts without the help of friends. And once you sign up for a quest, you won't be able to rest on your laurels. There will be other groups competing for the same prize, so you'll have to rely on teamwork for some of the more difficult quests in order to beat out the competition. And at the end of most of the quests, you'll be given special items that will most likely be able to be used on your characters or displayed as trophies in your customized "room."

Sort of like *Animal Crossing*, your character's "room" will be what you want to make of it. You're able to store all sorts of goodies there, while decorating it to your liking. Imagine it as a trophy case that you can show off to friends as bragging rights. And with the use of the Communicator, you'll be able to invite friends to your room to chat. It's like the real world, except better… and with trolls.

While there's still a lot of information about *TFLO* that has yet to be released or specified, we're already banking on it being one of the biggest console achievements for 2004. Expect plenty of upcoming coverage of it as it takes a more solid shape in the new year.

– Francesca Reyes

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD
■ Character creation allows loads of customization
■ Tons of depth and high level of interaction with game world

NEEDS WORK
■ Many important details are still left to iron out

FINAL THOUGHTS
With so much ambition, it's difficult to imagine *TFLO* being able to pull it all off seamlessly, but after seeing the game in motion it's equally difficult to picture it not being extraordinary. We can't wait.

■ **ULTIMATE RPG?:** The guy overseeing the entire project, Mr. Hino from Level-5, has said that his main point of reference and inspiration in designing the game has been *Ultima Online*.

Reviews

Decisive reviews for indecisive gamers



How we score

10 – 8.5 Only the best and the brightest score in this range. If it scores 9.0 or above, then there's no guessing involved. Buy it, love it, and watch as other games follow in its footsteps.

8.4 – 7.0 Just shy of greatness, but still an exceptional experience.

6.9 – 5.0 There's a bit of entertainment to be found, but something's amiss.

4.9 – 2.0 Rushed, poorly executed, or maybe just tired. Only fools dare tread further.

1.9 – 0.0 Craptacular goodness that is proud to call *Fantastic Four* (PSOne) or *Superman* (N64) its superiors.

Editor's Choice Award
Any game that scores 9.0 or higher will be stamped with our Editor's Choice Award. This designation guarantees a solid game to be had by all (all that have $50, of course). So buy it already.

ON THE GAME DISC video

OFFICIAL XBOX MAGAZINE EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

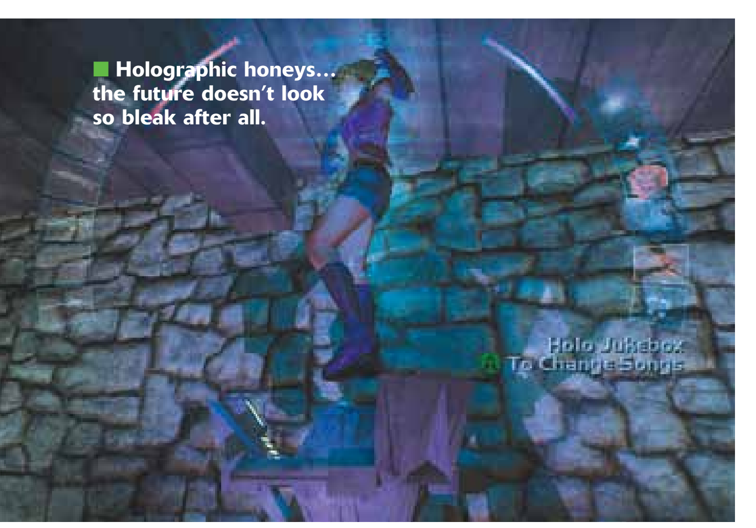
■ Hey kid! Where were you on the night of October 21st?

Another killer Xbox RPG

Deus Ex Invisible War

XBOX Official Xbox Magazine EDITOR'S CHOICE

DEVELOPER **ION STORM** | PUBLISHER **EIDOS**
MULTIPLAYER **NONE** | WEBSITE **WWW.DEUSEX.COM**



■ Holographic honeys... the future doesn't look so bleak after all.

Set in the mid-21st century, two decades after the fall of modern civilization, *Invisible War* isn't easy to describe. Cross *Morrowind* with *Halo* for a general idea. You play Alex D. (male or female, your choice), a student at Chicago's Tarsus Academy for "BioModded" individuals. After a terrorist destroys the entire city, the game and search for answers begins once you've escaped to Seattle.

Let's be clear up front: you can play this as a stealth game or a run-and-gun shooter, but *Deus Ex* is an RPG at heart. Rarely do you have fewer than three quests to choose from at any given time. Character development is achieved via BioMod canisters, with five augmentable areas of your body: eye, cranial, skeletal, arm, and leg. Each section has three different upgrades – including one "black market" BioMod that has cool effects but whose canisters are harder to come by – and each ability can be upped to level three. Thus, the type of character you can make is up to you. For instance, I assembled a sneaky hacker (see boxout).

You could also make a straight combat guy or mix and match to suit your preferred gaming style. And though the different combinations are a lot of fun, there's a problem: there are way too many BioMod canisters and not enough tough choices. Half the fun of an RPG is pining over which skills to invest in, but I had no fewer than a dozen extra canisters by the end.

The freedom afforded you in character development also extends into gameplay situations. There are at least three or four different ways to tackle any problem in the game. Got a room full of guys with a military patrol bot to contend with and a locked door on the other side? Cloak and sneak by them all, then use a multitool to crack the door code. Alternatively, you can arm yourself with one of about a dozen weapons and ice them all and pick up the door code off of one of the corpses. Or how about you sneak up to the bot, dominate it, and use its heavy artillery to terminate everyone while your vulnerable body is safely tucked away in a dark corner, then pick up and hide all of the bodies so no other foes see them? It's your choice.

Technologically, *Deus Ex* is ambitious. The lighting is 100% realtime, unlike *Splinter Cell*, which picks its spots. Everything is also bump- and normal-mapped, making for some impressive visuals. The physics engine, too, is unparalleled, with every object carrying an appropriate weight and balance. It all ups the immersion factor. Unfortunately, the cost of this ambition is a poor framerate that always hovers at or below 30fps. And while we're talking tech, for as good as this game looks, the characters have faces whose eyes blink and lips move but are otherwise expressionless. Weird.

Technical quibbles aside, *Deus Ex* is a brilliant RPG that manages to pull off freeform gameplay without a hitch. It's as smart as you want it to be, and cuts no gameplay corners.

– Ryan McCaffrey

HACKIN' & SNEAKIN'

Here's Ryan's multi-talented Alex D. Just one of a variety of combinations you can use to suit your gaming style.

Slot	BioMod	Black Market	Effect
Eye	Vision Enhancement	No	Night vision/see through walls
Cranial	Neural Interface	Yes	Hack computers/shut down security
Skeletal	Thermal Masking	No	Invisible to mechanical units
Arm	Bot Domination	Yes	Possess bots, cameras, and turrets
Leg	Move Silently	No	Move quietly/fall undamaged

■ The ragdoll portion of the great physics system allows for disturbing corpse positions.

THE NEW RPG HEAVEN

After a slow start, the Xbox has some seriously awesome roleplaying games. Check out this list of RPGs you'll only find on the Xbox:

DEUS EX: INVISIBLE WAR **– You just read the review of this RPG masterpiece. An open-ended delight.**

STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC **Best RPG on any console today.**

MORROWIND: GAME OF THE YEAR EDITION **New $30 package with two expansions and bug fixes. Easily 150 hours of gameplay. Yummy.**

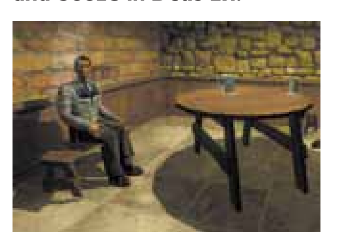
SUDEKI **– Fantasy RPG that throws realtime combat into the mix is looking better each time we see it (due early 2004).**

FABLE **– This ambitious title pits you in a dual role as celebrity and hero. The unique concept has us stoked (due mid 2004).**

TRUE FANTASY LIVE ONLINE **– The Xbox's first true MMORPG (that's massively multiplayer online roleplaying game) has a beautiful art style and promising gameplay (due mid 2004).**



■ For all you alkies and smokers, there are cigarettes and booze in *Deus Ex*.



■ Grab a brew and share a round with a couple of complete strangers.

THE VERDICT

Graphics
The most technologically impressive engine on Xbox yet. Bump- and normal-mapping galore, stunning lighting engine, and incredible physics. The textures are pretty drab, though, and the framerate drags things down a notch.

Immersion
It's like *KOTOR* in the sense that there's always something to do, so you never want to stop playing. You'll likely find yourself saving often and replaying certain scenarios just to try them a different way.

Sound
Standard stuff here. Surround sound could've been put to better use, especially for a stealth game (optionally stealth, anyway). Voice acting is mediocre, and music is too sparse.

Design
It ain't easy to design, build, and test an open-ended game like this, but ION Storm pulled it off. There truly are multiple paths to every goal, and we applaud the inclusion of not one but four different endings.

(+) Good, (–) Bad, (?) Perplexing
+ Open-ended roleplaying = sweet!
+ Awesome engine
+ Good story with multiple endings
– Disappointing framerate
– At 20 hours, it's a bit short by RPG standards
? Why don't people's faces show emotion in the future?



■ **POTTY PRESENCE:** We don't have an official count, but we think it's safe to say that *Invisible War* has more bathrooms than any game in the history of mankind.

■ **INSIDE STUFF:** Those who've played the first game will recognize a few areas as well as a few faces. To say any more, though, would spoil the fun.

How the West lost the plot

Dead Man's Hand

DEVELOPER **HUMAN HEAD STUDIOS** | PUBLISHER **ATARI** | MULTIPLAYER **1-2 SPLIT SCREEN, 1-8 SYSTEM LINK OR XBOX LIVE**
WEBSITE **WWW.HUMANHEAD.COM** | PUBLISHER **DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT**



Watch the AI stand there until you kill them. Yay.

Yes, you can ride a horse. Can't control Mr. Ed, though.



We certainly applaud the attempt – an Old West first-person shooter is something few others have attempted – but setting that aside, *Dead Man's Hand* simply isn't playing with a full deck.

The story is your typical revenge scenario: as Tejon, a former member of a gang called The Nine, your comrades shot you and left you for dead after you suddenly developed a conscience. You survive, and decide that killin' is needed.

Problem one: the levels. In typical Western fashion, they're empty and quiet. There's just nothing going on in these maps, and it's boring. Bigger problem: the AI. It's barely there.

Intentionally or not, *DMH* plays like an old arcade shooting gallery. Foes pop up, shoot at you, and don't move much until you kill them. You earn "Legend Points" by shooting off their hats and other turning other cool gunplay tricks, and in turn you get better. This would've been fun six years ago, but not today.

There are some good points, but they all come with asterisks. The physics are excellent: you can, for instance, shoot a powder keg so it explodes and causes an overhang to fall and crush those underneath. And enemies do ragdoll nicely, but unfortunately they vanish two seconds after hitting the ground, so you can't see what painful positions they've contorted into. Also, you play poker before each level, potentially earning extra ammo and goodies, but you can't set your wager.

The best levels put you on horseback, but you can't control your steed and there are only a few of these maps in the game. Furthermore, the obligatory speeding train level comes long after you've given up. There is System Link and Xbox Live multiplayer (with bots, even), but the core game isn't compelling enough to want to play online. This is a fine example of a great concept and really poor execution that just leaves you extra disappointed because you so badly wanted it to be cool.

– Ryan McCaffrey

THE VERDICT

Graphics
Mediocre. A few framerate stutters and a whole lot 'o brown don't help things look good. Stale environments are yawn-worthy at best.

Immersion
Minimal. If the game is trying to convince us that the Old West was a quiet, boring place, then they've succeeded.

Sound
Appropriate music that's decent to listen to, but voice work is mediocre at best.

Design
Awful AI, boring levels, easy boss fights, and not enough variation in the weapons all add up to a forgettable experience. The inclusion of Xbox Live multiplayer with bots is the best part.

(+) Good, (–) Bad, (?) Perplexing
+ Pre-level poker games
+ Shoot people on horseback!
+ Good physics
– Deserted, lifeless levels
– Atrocious AI
– Insta-Vanish™ bodies negate cool physics system
? Why can't anyone make a good Western game?

Official Xbox Magazine verdict **5.0** / 10.0

HOW LONG?: The last semi-good Western game was the PC's *Outlaws*, a 1997 spaghetti-Western-themed first-person shooter.

GoldenEye's developers arrive on the Xbox in Rare form

Grabbed by the Ghoulies

DEVELOPER **RARE LTD.** | PUBLISHER **MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS** | MULTIPLAYER **NO**
WEBSITE **WWW.GRABBEDBYTHEGHOULIES.COM** | EXTRAS **XBOX EXCLUSIVE**



■ The difficulty ramps up subtly, but you'll often find yourself surrounded in any given room.

When Rare made the leap from Nintendo to Microsoft, fans waited anxiously to see how the studio would adjust. *Grabbed by the Ghoulies* is Rare's first Xbox game, and while it's a mixed bag, it proves that Rare hasn't given up the ghost.

Despite superficial similarities to *Luigi's Mansion*, *Ghoulies* is a different beast altogether. In this 3D action-adventure beat-'em-up, our boy, Cooper, must rescue his girl from a 60-room haunted mansion by pulverizing the Ghoulies therein. It has an intuitive *Smash TV*-like control scheme: move with the left stick and fight by pushing the right stick towards an enemy. The triggers control the camera, A picks up a weapon, and B drops it. It's accessible to gamers of all skill levels, yet funny enough to hold your attention throughout.

The humor in *Ghoulies* works on two levels: the overt slapstick comedy, and the less obvious I-can't-believe-they-got-away-with-that naughtiness that lies under the surface. But don't worry, parents: the risqué humor is subtle enough that only more (allegedly) mature gamers will pick up on it.

Although *Ghoulies* is billed as a 3D action-adventure game, it's actually more akin to an action-puzzler like Blizzard's *The Lost Vikings*. The game is divided into 100 chapters – most start with Cooper being locked in a room and end when you leave the room via its one exit by completing a certain task. For example, at times you need to defeat all the Ghoulies in a room, or smash objects to reveal a key, or survive for a certain amount of time.

Ghoulies tries to stay fresh by attaching additional conditions to each chapter's goal – destroy the Ghoulies within a time limit, or without weapons, etc. Sadly, the game's design is so basic that it gets repetitive quickly. By the time you make it through the first third of the game, you'll start to think that the game should have been called *Led Around by the Ghoulies*.

Sure, there are bonus challenges to be unlocked, and you can revisit any of the chapters you've played through. But if you're already tired of running through the mansion by yourself, you're not going to find anything here that extends replayability. An utter lack of multiplayer game modes makes the whole package a bit shallow. Although it's worth the 5-10 hours of your time that it will take to complete the main game, we honestly expected a little more.

– Bryan Stratton

Naughty, naughty!

If the ESRB were English and less pure-minded, they would have caught these not-quite-E-for-Everyone hijinx:

The Name of the Game: If *Grabbed by the Ghoulies* had been translated from British English to American English, the game would have probably been called something like *Apprehended by One's "Family Jewels."*

Little Willy: Groundskeeper Fiddlesworth claims to have a nephew named "Little Willy." Who's fond of squirting his water pistol. And who has recently undergone an eye operation (making him one-eyed?). Put it together for yourself, people.

Roger the Cabin Boy: Okay, you *seriously* need to wait until you're older to know why this is just plain wrong. Let's just say that, in England, "roger" is a dirty verb, and there's a reason why Brits find the notion of a children's TV show called "Mr. Roger's Neighborhood" absolutely appalling.

THE VERDICT

Graphics
Extremely smooth cartoony animations in fully 3D environments with a camera that's usually smart enough to give you a good view of the action.

Immersion
The controls are simple and intuitive, making *Ghoulies* accessible to gamers of all skill levels. Dirty double entendres keep grown-up gamers entertained but sail harmlessly past younger ears.

Sound
Excellent voice and sound effects, with a soundtrack that will bore its way into your skull and rattle around in your head for days. In a good way.

Design
Completely linear, with gameplay that gets repetitive long before the charm and wit of the rest of the game wears off.

(+) Good, (–) Bad, (?) Perplexing
+ Great humor and a refreshingly intuitive control scheme
– Gets slightly repetitive and doesn't have enough replay value or multiplayer
? What do you call a lobotomy of a character's personality? Persobotomy?



■ **WEIRD BRITISH BOYS:** The theme song for the British Boy Scouts is "Ging-gang, goolie-goolie-goolie-goolie-whatsit, ging-gang goo." We haven't a clue what it means, but they do say goolie.



The physicality of the races is perfectly suited to Live play.

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Best. (racing) Game. Ever.

CHALLENGE pg. 118

Project Gotham Racing 2



The lighting effects are spectacular.

DEVELOPER **BIZARRE CREATIONS** | PUBLISHER **MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS** | MULTIPLAYER **1-8 (XBOX LIVE)**
WEBSITE **WWW.XBOX.COM** | EXTRAS **XBOX LIVE, WEEKLY CHALLENGES, DOWNLOADABLE TRACKS, CARS, AND CITY**



You can look to the right, left, or behind on the fly.

Much more than just the most intensely satisfying racing experience in the history of mankind, *Project Gotham Racing 2* is actually a game that redefines a console and creates an unparalleled online experience.

Put succinctly, it rules.

The original *Project Gotham* was a great game, but the sequel is so much more in nearly every regard. Let's start with the graphics. The car models are so detailed that walking through the first-person showrooms (think *Halo* in a car dealership… without the aliens or shooting) is actually a way to shop for real cars (if you actually have the kind of cash it takes to bring one of these super cars home). And once they take to the track it all gets exponentially better with stunning lighting, amazing textures, and cities that are so detailed you can actually consider yourself a world traveler after playing the game. And unlike most racing games featuring licensed vehicles, you can actually smash these beauties to pieces. While none of the damage affects performance, it does look awfully realistic.

Ghost downloads are brilliant.



This game takes realistic damage to a new level.

If you didn't play the original and are unfamiliar with the unique Kudos system, then let me 'splain. *PGR2* isn't just about being the fastest car… in fact, that is just a tiny portion of the game. It's all about driving with style, building up combos, and basically spinning all over the excellently designed tracks. For each maneuver you pull off you get points, then if you pull off another move you get a combo, and if you're really good you can string together combos for an entire three-lap race and end up with some ridiculous scores. In *PGR2*, the Kudos system has been refined to near perfection with a much greater opportunity for combos and a complete analysis of what scored you the most points.

With so much stuff to do in *PGR2*, it is actually a bit daunting at first. You can race through the Kudos World Series, which contains 14 classes of cars, each with a number and variety of race types from street racing to hot lap to cone challenges that you have to complete before moving onto the next. You can also go straight to Cone Challenges, Street Racing, or Timed Runs to gain Kudos, buy cars, and generally engross yourself in the experience. Without even thinking about the multiplayer and Xbox Live challenges, there is enough game here to last you until the release of *Halo 2*. As a single-player game with no Xbox Live service, this game is brilliant… *with* Xbox Live it is brilliant times infinity plus one.

The multiplayer races are fast and uniquely physical, creating the perfect opportunity to use your Xbox Communicator as you ram some scumbag off the road. But that is really only a small part of the Xbox Live story. If you have *PGR2* and Xbox Live, then every single time you run a race or cone challenge you will not only see your single-player score, but you'll see how you rank around the world on that one track and throughout the whole game. Plus you have the choice to race against (or watch) the ghost of the car that had the best time/points for any given track. If you have even an ounce of competitiveness inside you then you are likely to spend days – maybe even weeks – trying to perfect just *one* of the 448 runs. And the fact that you can see the best racer in motion means that the game provides a living strategy guide for every track. This is what Xbox Live is all about: a true showcase of features that couldn't be done on any other system and a completely unique (and addictive) gameplay experience.

PGR 2 is to racing games is what *Halo* was to first-person shooters. It's a stunning achievement in design, playability, good old-fashioned fun, and in my humble opinion the best Xbox game this year. If you don't get this game, then I'm afraid I'd have to classify you as clueless.

– Mike Salmon

ON THE GAME DISC
demo

This demo is just a taste of the many delights of *PGR2*. Play the demo, be amazed, and try to collect three platinums (see challenges, pg. 118). Now run yourself to the store to buy the game (and Xbox Live if you don't already have it).

LIVIN' AND LOVIN' LIVE

This is why *PGR2* will literally take over your life once you start playing.

SINGLE PLAYER, SCHMINGLE PLAYER: You sit down to begin racing your way through the game. On the cone challenge you collect your silver medal and prepare to move to the next challenge…
LIVE LEADERS: …only one problem, you're point total on the track didn't even make the top 10. So it's back to the track for another run.
LIVE AND LEARN: Better but there are still a few "cheaters" (as you call them) ahead of you. As if to prove that they aren't cheating you are now able to download their ghost and witness how they continually top your best efforts.
NUMBER ONE: After learning how to best rack up points you finally see your name on top. There, now where were you? Oh that's right, still on the very first race of the game. Now multiply this scenario by 448 and remember that someone is probably beating your only number one score right now!

THE VERDICT

Graphics
A hair shy of perfection. Everything onscreen has an eerily realistic appearance.

Immersion
Amazing, but if you have Xbox Live then you may never escape the clutches of *PGR2*'s greatness.

Sound
The perfect game to use the Xbox custom soundtrack feature, and the sound effects are brilliant as well. Not to mention the literally hundreds of songs on the disc.

Design
No real single-player game structure, but it doesn't matter. Play it how you want and you'll love it.

(+) Good, (–) Bad, (?) Perplexing
+ Unique racing gameplay
+ Groundbreaking Xbox Live functionality
+ Insane depth
+ Force-feedback works to perfection
– Occasional lag in online races… but still better than any online racer before it
? How can this not be considered the best racing game ever made by any human who has ever played a racing game?

Official Xbox magazine verdict

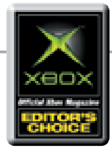


WAIT, THERE'S MORE: Let's not forget that *PGR2* also features upcoming downloads including a whole new city, new tracks, and new cars. If you don't have Live yet, then it's time.

WEEKLY CHALLENGES: Oh, I also forgot that every week there will be a new challenge on Xbox Live to try and master… damn, when it rains it pours.

At last, the word "arse" has its day

Armed and Dangerous



DEVELOPER **PLANET MOON STUDIOS** | PUBLISHER **LUCASARTS** | MULTIPLAYER **NO**
WEBSITE **WWW.LUCASARTS.COM** | EXTRAS **DOWNLOADABLE MISSIONS**



Hilarious weapons and weird enemies abound.

Plenty of variety, and all kinds of action.

Plenty of things you've never seen in a game before.

A lot has been made of *Armed & Dangerous'* ragtag crew of misfits – the Lionhearts and the slightly crack-smoking storyline – but in the end, all the bong-fueled antics take a back seat to action in what turns out to be the most surprisingly addictive shooter of the year.

We shouldn't be that surprised – after all, this game comes to us from the makers of *MDK* and *Giants: Citizen Kabuto*, both excellent titles of yore, but the game's frenetic sense of sheer fun is like nothing Planet Moon has done before. Think *Robotron* with a conscience.

Gameplay is almost mindless – *Halo*-style controls let you run, jump, and shoot around the expansive outdoor levels. You control Roman, the leader of the aforementioned Lionhearts, who will at times back you up in squad fashion while you take on hordes of villains.

Levels are broken into mission-sized chunks, and occasionally change the pace by introducing wall-turret missions (where you fend of absurd numbers of bad guys) or Jet-Pack missions, where you (literally) leap tall buildings in a single bound. The Jet-Pack missions are our favorites by far, allowing a previously unavailable level of freedom to explore levels.

Variety is provided in tandem with plot – one mission may have you rescuing villagers and returning them, *Defender*-style, to the safety of their homes. Another mission sees you defending lepers from an onslaught of zeppelins and parachuting shock troops. Manning turret guns, collecting weapon upgrades, and enjoying the surreal arsenal (including a gun that shoots killer land sharks and a black hole) drags you into even the most repetitive mission with a smile on your face.

The difficulty level can be a little spotty at times, in part thanks to a radar system that gets weirdly selective about what things it wants to show, and learning to use weapons properly will make a huge difference to later mission success. That said, replaying levels time after time simply doesn't get old. It's addictive in a very old-school way.

Graphically, it's an odd mix. Sometimes you'll find yourself in a brilliantly lit level, surrounded by convincing trees and incredible architecture – at other times you'll be up to your knees in the lamest water since *Shark* on the Atari 2600.

The inclusion of downloadable extra missions is a huge boon, since the included bonus missions (especially Arena) are a lot more enjoyable than you might expect. Basically (apart from the water) the game's only glaring fault is its lack of multiplayer, something we hope will be remedied in a well-deserved and now anticipated sequel.

– Frank O'Connor

THE VERDICT

Graphics
Often brilliant, with hordes of impressively animated bad guys. Plus lame water.

Immersion
Drags you in and keeps you there with the endless and mindless blasting.

Sound
Songs! Choons! Folk music and occasionally amusing dialogue.

Design
Nicely paced with well-thought out missions.

(+) Good, (–) Bad, (?) Perplexing
+ Stupid, enjoyable action
+ Funny, original premise
+ Most pubs in any game ever
– Stinky water effects
? No multiplayer

Official Xbox magazine verdict **9.0** 10.0

SWEARY MARY: The *Armed and Dangerous* dialogue is filled with delicious British swears, including "arse," "pants," and "bastard."

Ben Affleck not included

Medal of Honor: Rising Sun

DEVELOPER **EA** | PUBLISHER **EA** | MULTIPLAYER **1-4 VIA SPLITSCREEN**
WEBSITE **WWW.EA.COM** | EXTRAS **DOLBY 5.1**

When an FPS is released on Xbox, it is always unenviably compared to *Halo*, which ain't easy. *MoH: Frontline* was one that actually held it's own. The sequel, *MOH: Rising Sun*, takes the action over the Pacific to the Philippine jungles

The environments have been overhauled and include varying terrain. This isn't merely cosmetic – improvements actually provide deeper strategy during gameplay with new melee attacks and improved enemy AI, (though enemies still rival *Resident Evil* zombies in agility).

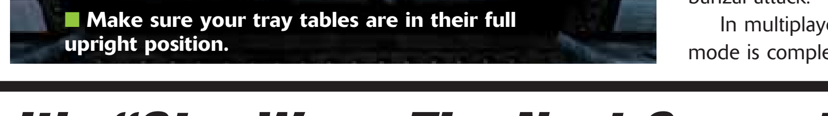
Although improved from *MOHFL*, the game still sports flat textures that look "blocky" at times. Despite this, little details, such as particle effects, character models, and environmental elements such as fog have been added to nice effect.

But Dolby 5.1 saves the day. The audio is so well done that you can actually feel the bullets zip past your ear. The soundtrack is excellent as well, building up tension and suspense with each banzai attack.

In multiplayer, Deathmatch mode is complete with customizable options and ten unique levels, straight from the campaign. Sadly, multiplayer is still limited to splitscreen. Luckily *MOHRS* still has a co-op mode so you can play through with a friend. Although online is sorely missing, co-op is a blast.

It is still a mystery as why blood is absent from one of the goriest events in history. Even so, *MOHRS* still manages to deliver a very satisfying experience.

– Chris Thompson



■ Make sure your tray tables are in their full upright position.



It's "Star Wars: The Next Generation"!

Jedi Knight III: Jedi Academy

DEVELOPER **VICARIOUS VISIONS** | PUBLISHER **LUCASARTS** | MULTIPLAYER **2-PLAYER SPLIT SCREEN**
WEBSITE **WWW.LUCASARTS.COM** | EXTRAS **XBOX LIVE**

Following one Jedi trainee and his path toward Jedi enlightenment, this game features light and dark themes, which have no real effect on the game. You can kill a bunch of innocents yet still be a light warrior as long as you make one crucial decision at game's end.

Control has been tightened up compared to *Jedi Knight II*, although not as smooth as *Return to Castle Wolfenstein*.

Strangely, the AI and path-finding are worse than the PC version, with NPCs and enemies teetering between dumb and idiotic. Attack strategies usually consist of rushing the player with a weapon drawn. For example, in the first stage, if you're not careful when you throw your lightsaber, the person you're escorting will walk into its path and get killed when it returns.

By itself the poor AI isn't a game killer, but a balancing flaw produces a Jedi power that's easy to exploit. Level up your Force grab and Force heal powers, and there's little to fear in the game. It's no god mode, but it's close.

Multiplayer combat is *Jedi Academy*'s strong point, with support for split screen, System Link, and Xbox Live. The real draw is Siege mode, which splits the group of players into two teams, each with specific goals to meet. Siege requires teamwork in order to play effectively, and the Live headset is a great asset for it.

Jedi Academy was a solid game on PC, but, sadly, the Xbox version falls far short in nearly every regard.

– Adam Pavlacka



■ You'll be able to choose your Jedi's gender (male or female) at the start of the game.

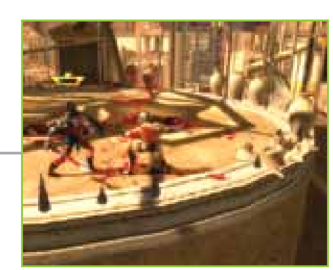


■ **KING OF DENIAL:** Hiroo Onoda was the last Japanese soldier to surrender in 1974. He had been hiding on Lubang Island and it took his commanding officer to convince him that the war was over.

Blood, gore, and button mashing extraordinaire

Gladiator: Sword of Vengeance

■ **Get thee to a blood bank.**



DEVELOPER **ACCLAIM MANCHESTER** | PUBLISHER **ACCLAIM**
MULTIPLAYER **NONE** | WEBSITE **WWW.ACCLAIM.COM**

A brawler at its heart, *Gladiator* is not short on blood or action, but it is lacking somewhat in depth. Much of the game consists of fighting, which looks impressive but boils down to nothing more than a good deal of button mashing. Execution moves keep the gore factor up, but again, they are just for looks.

Levels are rendered in a high level of detail, but a restricted camera often gives you a feeling of claustrophobia. Basic puzzles are scattered about to add a bit of variety, but there is little in the way of innovation to make the game stand out.

Although the fighting itself is basic, *Gladiator* does give the player the ability to choose between a few different weapon and magic types, which can be useful in the later levels.

Ultimately, if you're just looking for a bit of mindless fun, *Gladiator* fits the bill well, but players wanting something a bit deeper should probably pass.

– Adam Pavlacka



A lot of bang for the buck...

Midway Arcade Treasures

■ **The Atari games hold up better than the Midway ones.**



DEVELOPER **DIGITAL ECLIPSE** | PUBLISHER **MIDWAY** | MULTIPLAYER **VARIES BY GAME**
WEBSITE **WWW.MIDWAY.COM** | EXTRAS **MUSEUM COLLECTION**

There are literally too many games included in this coin-op collection to list in their entirety, but here's a few highlights: *Marble Madness*, *Toobin'*, *Defender*, *Sinistar*, *Super Sprint*, and *Paperboy*. The collection should be called *Midway, Atari, and Williams Arcade Treasures*, since games from all three are included here.

The games themselves (20+), with the exception of one or two clunkers, are US arcade classics at their very best. The Atari games are worth the price of admission alone, with perfect renditions of some great games – *Super Sprint* hasn't aged a day.

At a mere $20 it represents impossible value and is probably a must-have for crusty old gamers. The weird interface and patchy museum (a series of flyers, interviews, etc.) may be a slight drawback for some, but this is a must-have for collectors of arcane arcadia.

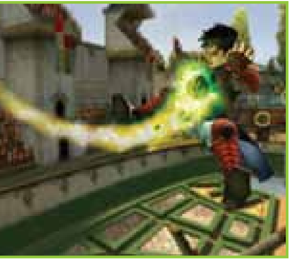
– Frank O'Connor



The fantasy sport comes to life

Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup

■ **Potter fans of the world, unite and take over.**



DEVELOPER **EA UK** | PUBLISHER **EA** | MULTIPLAYER **2 PLAYERS**
WEBSITE **WWW.EA.COM** | EXTRAS **UNLOCKABLE ITEMS AND LEVELS**

Love it or hate it, there is no denying the mass appeal of *Harry Potter*.

Each side in the game consists of a seven-man team, and players are given the chance to man each position. The majority of play consists of goal scoring until a certain point is reached and the Snitch is released for play. At that point the play style switches to a racing style of play, with the player attempting to track the Snitch and catch it.

Although the game is played in what looks like a 3D arena, there is no ability to change your height. Even so, there is still plenty of variety in gameplay and the AI makes for a more than decent opponent.

A series of unlockable items keeps interest in the single-player mode, with the final bonus being the ability to play Quidditch's predecessor, the poorly named Queerditch.

– Adam Pavlacka



■ **SUPER SPRINT SURPRISE:** Although *Super Sprint* is unarguably one of the greatest arcade racing games ever made, it does have a superior: the rarely-seen sequel, *Championship Sprint*.

Just like last year... again

NBA Inside Drive 2004

ON THE GAME DISC video

DEVELOPER **HIGH VOLTAGE SOFTWARE** | PUBLISHER **MICROSOFT**
MULTIPLAYER **4 PLUS XBOX LIVE** | WEBSITE **WWW.XSNSPORTS.COM**

The *Inside Drive* series started out strong, but in recent editions improvements have only trickled in. This year, the franchise boasts XSN Sports online support, but the rest of the game seems barely improved. Compared to the strides made by the competition, that's quite disappointing.

Inside Drive plays well thanks to solid defensive AI, analog stick moves, and a wealth of intuitive strategy options. The presentation doesn't have the competition's polish or flair, but the visuals and sound get the job done.

On the down side, the controls still feel sloppy (especially during big animations) and the game lacks depth. We enjoyed the franchise mode, for instance, until we discovered we could easily trade Scott Pollard-like journeymen for lottery picks.

Inside Drive 2004 is an enjoyable game for those who already appreciate the series and are looking for an online update. But there are definitely better b-ball games on Xbox.

– Dan Egger



Here's a tip, always double-team the player on the box.



Strong fundamentals but not enough flash

ESPN College Hoops

DEVELOPER **KUSH GAMES** | PUBLISHER **SEGA**
WEBSITE **WWW.ESPNVIDEOGAMES.COM** | MULTIPLAYER **1-8**

While the visuals in *ESPN College Hoops* show their age, the game's packed with new gameplay and depth.

The improvements begin with controls. The revamped *ESPN* plays much better, thanks to analog crossovers and wide-open gameplay. In fact, you can actually run the fast break.

This improved gameplay is added to an impressive body of depth. There's an insanely deep Legacy mode that provides countless hours of gaming for those willing to wade through needlessly confusing design. There's also a Dunk Contest and unlockable goodies you can buy at the Campus Store. Most importantly, this game supports Xbox Live.

College Hoops is a near-total package, but when compared head to head with *March Madness 2004*, it doesn't feel as exciting or addictive. Good, but not good enough.

– Dan Egger



There aren't many cheap baskets in this game. If you want to drive the hoop, you'll have to earn it.

THE VERDICT
Official Xbox Magazine verdict
8.8
10.0

College basketball at its finest... and most addictive

NCAA March Madness 2004

DEVELOPER **EA** | PUBLISHER **EA** | MULTIPLAYER **1-8**
WEBSITE **WWW.EASPORTS.COM**

Hi, my name's Dan Egger and I have a problem. I'm addicted to *March Madness 2004*.

While reviewing this game, I literally stayed up night after night playing when I should have been writing.

My doctor's opinion is that the compulsion is mostly a result of great gameplay. The control is perfectly suited for fast-paced college ball. I can't get enough of the fast breaks and speed of play. It might not be authentic, but it's exciting. Also, the atmosphere is ideal. Hoops junkies like me appreciate the attention to detail in rivalries, mascot games, and other key elements.

The biggest hook, however, is the Dynasty mode. While it's practically Xeroxed from *NCAA Football 2004* (the best ever), this mode is unmatched in terms of simplicity and sheer playability.

So, here's your precious review. Despite the inexcusable omission of Xbox Live support, this is the best college basketball game on the Xbox. Now, if you'll pardon me, I think it's time for a relapse.

– Dan Egger



The player models look wacky, and the Afros are out of control.



ESPN HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL?: With the amount of players going straight from high school to the NBA and the attention being paid to teenage players, is a videogame far behind?



FEATURE STRATEGY, PAGE 44

The citizens of Liberty City should really learn to lock their car doors.

The addition of motorcycles is one of *Vice City*'s biggest new features.

Kick ass on land, in the air, or on the ocean.

Got 'em. Head for Diaz's as fast as you can!

The pain of waiting is equaled only by the joy of its arrival

Grand Theft Auto Double Pack

CHALLENGE pg. 118

XBOX Official Xbox Magazine EDITOR'S CHOICE

DEVELOPER **ROCKSTAR NORTH** | PUBLISHER **ROCKSTAR GAMES** | MULTIPLAYER **NONE**
WEBSITE **WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM** | EXTRAS **480P HDTV, CUSTOM SOUNDTRACK SUPPORT, DOLBY 5.1**



Character models are one big area of improvement for the Xbox version.

By now, you know the legend of *Grand Theft Auto*. Either your friends have told you about it, you've played the PS2 version, or you read our November issue feature. In a nutshell, it's a freeform action/adventure/driving game where you step into the role of a low-on-the-totem-pole thug who's looking to move up in the underworld. It all takes place in a living, breathing, fully realized city where you're free to roam on foot, carjack a vehicle, or utilize mass transit. A plethora of seedy folks hand out dozens upon dozens of missions that run the gamut from straightforward assassinations to checkpoint races around town to corpse disposal. Then, when you're done with those, there are a bajillion minigames to keep you busy until you die.

The Mafia are one of many gangs you'll take jobs from.

And up until now, this greatness has only been available on the PS2. We've waited a long time, but our patience has been rewarded with a double shot of *GTA*. Both the groundbreaking *GTA III* and the sensational not-quite-sequel *Vice City* have been bundled into one $50 package and released on Xbox, and they've brought some impressive technical improvements with them.



You'll be aided by a few friends as you climb the underworld ladder.

The first thing you'll notice, if you've got a nice TV, is 16x9 widescreen HDTV support. It's simply stunning to experience the worlds of Liberty City and Vice City in this fashion. Street signs are clear and legible, the cars look sweet, and vehicle license plates are readable. Furthermore, the lighting engine's been revamped. Reflections off of car windows now look spectacular, and general lighting's a bit sharper too. Character models have also been redone, making the main characters in particular more defined than ever. In general, the games simply look remarkably clean. Custom soundtrack support's been added, too (labeled in-game as the CD player in *GTA 3* and the tape deck in *Vice City*). Perhaps the most welcome enhancement, though, is the dramatic decrease in level load times. They're virtually instantaneous now, so there's essentially no break as you load your game or travel from one area of town to another.

On the gameplay side of the coin, nothing's been changed or added, and frankly, we're relieved. There's no reason to mess with success. Our only complaint with regards to the gameplay is a technology limitation: when attempting to jack-'n'-stack a bunch of cars in one place – say, to obstruct the path of your opponents prior to a race mission – the memory wipes out your stockpile after you walk away and come back with that third or fourth car. With double the amount of memory on the Xbox compared to the PS2 (plus the hard drive), this could've and should've been addressed.

In the end, should you buy this bundle? The wait has been long and torturous, but when it comes to a franchise as incredible as *GTA*, we subscribe to the "better late than never" philosophy. Whether you've already played them or not, the pair of masterpieces contained within the *Grand Theft Auto Double Pack* are too good to pass up, especially when it's a two-for-one deal.

– Ryan McCaffrey



Graphics
Not built from the ground up for Xbox, but nicely adapted to our system. 480p brings this game to life, the loading times are next to nothing, and the lighting is awesome compared to the PS2 versions.

Immersion
There's always something to do in Liberty City and Vice City. Stuck on a tough mission? Go do some taxicab runs. It's great when you know your way around the cities, but half the fun is getting to know your way around each area the first time.

Sound
Ka-ching! 5.1 is a treat, and custom soundtrack support is a natural choice for this package. Special nod to the voice acting in each game, too, particularly Ray Liotta's turn as Tommy Vercetti in *Vice City*.

Design
These games carved out an entirely new genre. We'd call that pretty damn good game design. Massive cities with logical districts, more missions than you can swing a baseball bat at, and some great tongue-in-cheek humor to boot. Insert applause here.

(+) Good, (–) Bad, (?) Perplexing
+ Two incredible, deep games for the price of one
+ Revolutionary gameplay with unlimited amount of things to do
+ Given a nice technical facelift for Xbox
– Some PS2 hardware limitations still here, unfortunately
– Let's face it: *Vice City* and *GTA* are one and two years old, respectively
? Why can't these gangsters swim?

Official Xbox magazine verdict **9.1** /10.0

EARL SCHEIB WOULD BE PROUD: A little tip for ya. Drive up to any Pay 'N Spray to get a new hue on your ride and lose the cops.

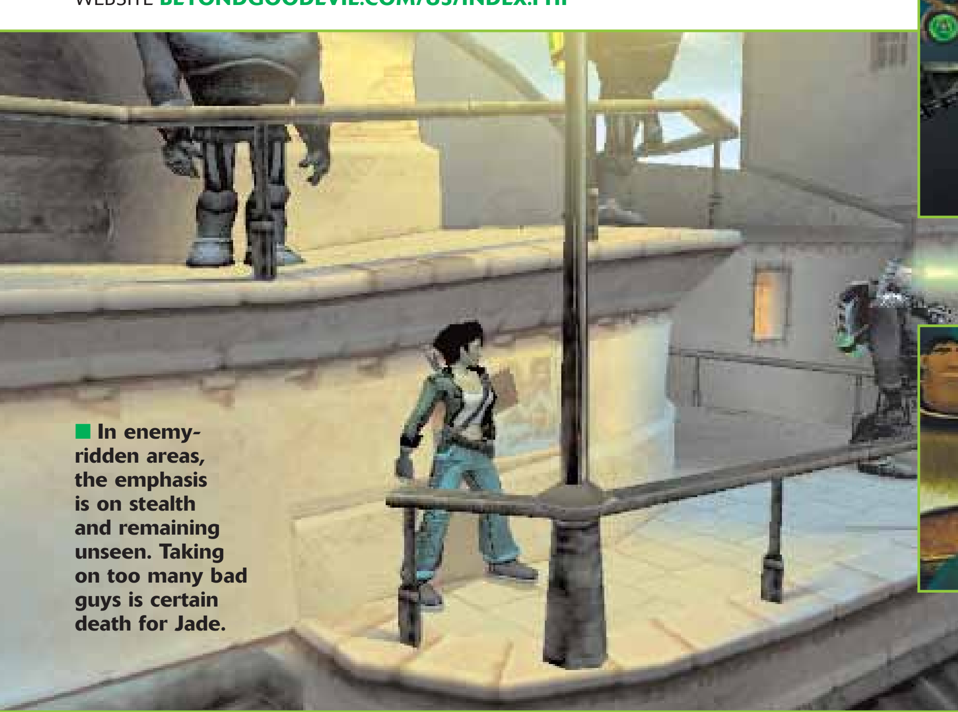
GET PSYCHO: Rampages are some of the most entertaining side missions. Look for skull icons scattered about the city.

Way beyond good

Beyond Good & Evil



DEVELOPER **UBISOFT** | PUBLISHER **UBISOFT** | MULTIPLAYER **NO**
WEBSITE **BEYONDGOODEVIL.COM/US/INDEX.PHP**



In enemy-ridden areas, the emphasis is on stealth and remaining unseen. Taking on too many bad guys is certain death for Jade.

Your hovercraft is fine for your homeworld, but you'll upgrade for outer space.

You'll have two different "sidekicks" who'll help you out of a pickle at many intervals.

It's near impossible to get across just how different and immersive *Beyond Good & Evil* is. With equal parts combat, adventure, and role-playing in one nicely spun story told through a wonderfully detailed cast of characters, *BG&E* is definitely a game for all of us who've marveled over the 3D open-world likes of *Shenmue* and *Zelda*.

You are an investigative reporter named Jade whose planet is under attack by a mysterious alien race called the Domz. Like alien races are wont to do, the Domz have been kidnapping citizens left and right. In the midst of the warfare, the people have come to rely on the militaristic rule of the Alpha Sections to protect them, but all is not as it seems. On a series of routine missions to capture photographic evidence, you stumble into assisting a rebel group convinced that the Alpha Sections are not what they appear.

From then on, you're sent on various missions that will have you utilizing stealth (Jade crouches with the best of them), taking and sending photos for reports, solving clever puzzles, upgrading your hovercraft ship to get around obstacles, and fighting bad guys to uncover the ultimate truth behind the conspiracies. Jade's world isn't the largest, but it includes plenty of interaction, shopping, and even flight combat. And everything blends together so well that the result is an enjoyable journey that never borders on tedious.

You'll find yourself scrambling to take photos of wildlife for extra cash, or competing in races to build up your Pearl collection to maintain your hovercraft. And while the game isn't nearly as long as you'd like it to be and Jade's world isn't as expansive as you wish it was – the fact is that there's no other Xbox game that offers you the uniquely multi-layered experience that *BG&E* does. And isn't that what gaming is all about?

– Francesca Reyes

THE VERDICT

Graphics
Deep, rich colors complemented by some very nice character designs.

Immersion
A complete world that may seem a little small or slow-paced at times, but living and breathing, all the same.

Sound
Good voice acting (aside from Billy Bob Peyj) and dramatic soundtrack.

Design
Everything in Jade's world works incredibly well together.

(+) Good, (–) Bad, (?) Perplexing
+ A solid game world with so much gameplay variety, it hurts
+ Great character designs and highly stylized graphics
– A little short, a little small, and probably not for everyone
? We hate Goat Boy. He must die.

Official Xbox magazine verdict **9.0** / 10.0

SHE'LL BE BACK?: Will Jade and Co. be back for more adventure in the future? According to our sources within Ubisoft, they're hoping to build a franchise out of it. We're stoked.

An old franchise remade, but not reborn

Robin Hood: Defender of the Crown

DEVELOPER **CINEMAWARE** | PUBLISHER **CAPCOM** | MULTIPLAYER **NONE**
WEBSITE **WWW.CAPCOM.COM**

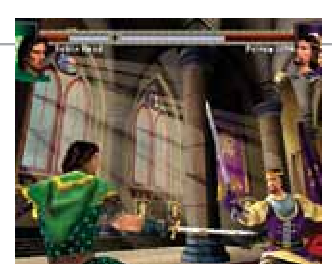
Set the time machine to the mid-1980s and fire up your Amiga, because Capcom and Cinemaware have resurrected *Defender of the Crown*. Essentially a port with updated graphics, with all the original features in tow.

Although most gamers look back on *DotC* with fondness, the title hasn't aged well, in part due to the segmented gameplay and rudimentary AI.

You'll spend your time raiding caravans, sword-fighting in a castle, and employing tactical strategy on the battlefield. Each segment is enjoyable at first, but the novelty wears thin and the game starts to feel shallow and a bit repetitive.

If the developers had taken the time to update the individual gameplay segments – for example, giving Robin the freedom to move around the forest when raiding caravans instead of stuck in a treetop perch – *DotC* could have been a hit. Though great in its day, as it is, *DotC* is only satisfying for those gamers eager to take a trip back down memory lane.

– Adam Pavlacka



Robin Hood does the mid-'80s swashbuckling thing.



Because cards are for gambling

Magic: The Gathering – Battlegrounds

DEVELOPER **SECRET LEVEL** | PUBLISHER **ATARI/WIZARDS OF THE COAST** | MULTIPLAYER **1-2 ONLINE**
WEBSITE **WWW.ATARI.COM** | EXTRAS **DOWNLOADABLE SPELLS AND AVATARS**

Based upon the incredibly successful *Magic: The Gathering* trading card game, this unique title is equal parts fighting game and RTS. Duels take the form of two mages standing on opposite sides of what looks like J.R.R. Tolkien's tennis court, hoarding mana crystals, and using summoning armies of up to five monstrous beasties at once, support spells, and the occasional swipe in an attempt to whittle the other guy's health down to zero.

In the end, you're basically trying to tank-rush the other guy, but with the deep, wonderfully balanced *Magic* battle system, there are a hundred different ways to do it, and both clever strategy and deft controller maneuvers are often required for victory. Visuals and audio are average, and the Quest Mode is actually just a massive training mode, but it fully prepares you to lay the smack down online, where the game's longevity will blossom.

– Eric Bratcher



70+ spells and five elemental classes can be quite hectic.



Captain's Log, Star Date 200312.3

Star Trek: Shattered Universe

DEVELOPER **STARSPHERE INTERACTIVE** | PUBLISHER **TDK** | MULTIPLAYER **NONE**
WEBSITE **WWW.TDKM.COM/GAMES/STARTREK**

The U.S.S. Excelsior has ventured into a mirrored universe where good and evil are reversed. We are under attack from all sides. We are crippled and must call upon Federation, Orion, Klingon, and Romulan fighters to explore and engage in combat. But fear not: controlling fighters is so rudimentary, an Ensign could do it. Each ship has three different weapon loadouts and standard Starship fundamentals: when shields are depleted, the hull takes damage. If the hull is breached, the ship is lost. The engineers have outdone themselves: inertial dampers prevent a sense of speed, and our comm link forces pilots to endure commands repeated endlessly in battle.

Though our foes have strength in numbers, their offense consists merely of sending wave after wave of fighters to destroy us. They perform maneuvers such as flying directly into our line of fire and are easily defeated. I must speak with Starfleet about these dangerous new tactics.

– Captain Hikaru Sulu
(aka Doug Trueman)



Who knew that fighting the Federation would be this easy?

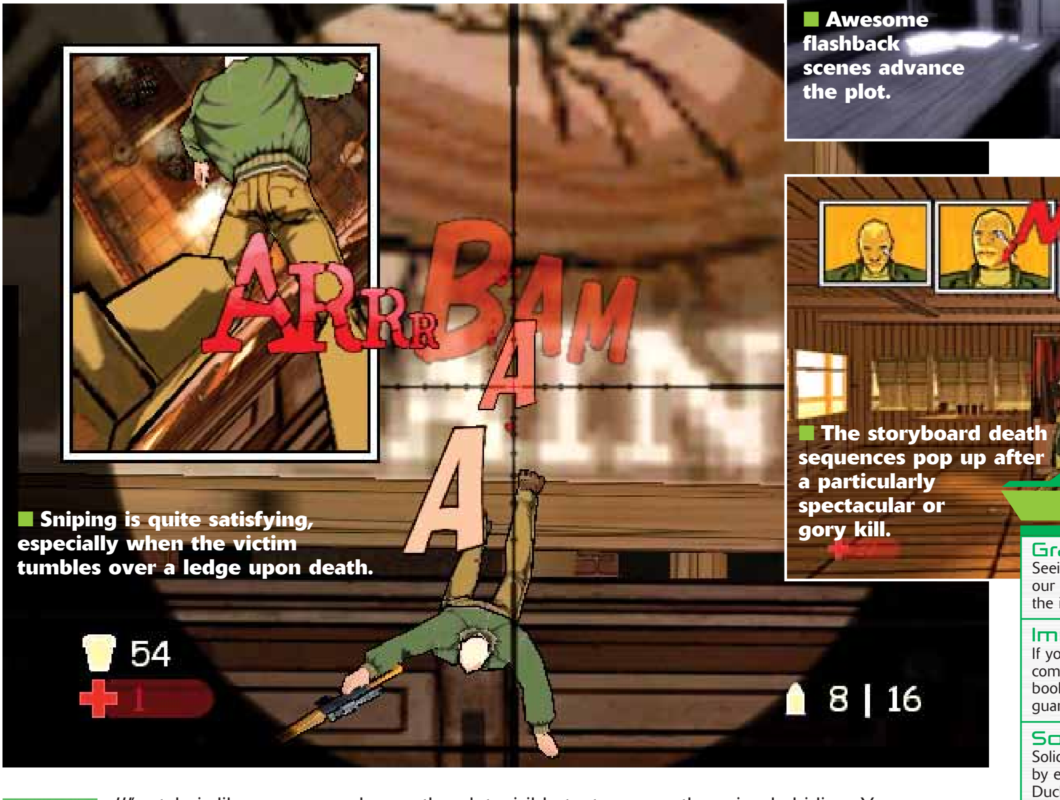


LONG, LONG AGO: According to Killer List of Videogames, the very first *Star Trek* game to be released was the For-Play designed *Star Trek* all the way back in 1972. Zeesh.

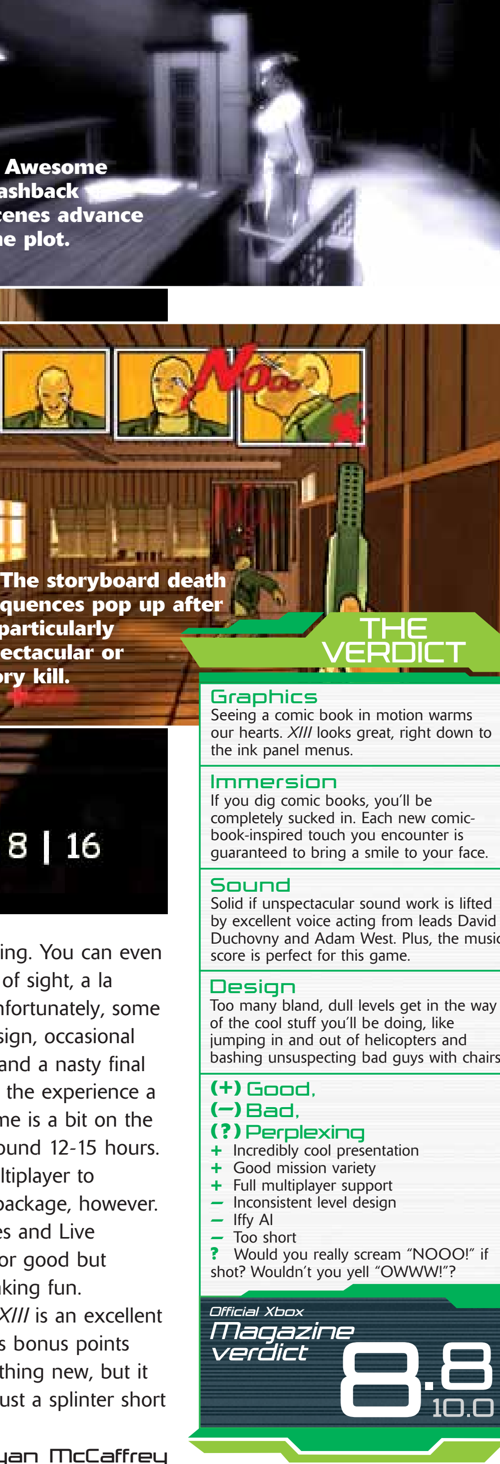
Unlucky number no more



DEVELOPER **UBISOFT** | PUBLISHER **UBISOFT**
MULTIPLAYER **SPLIT-SCREEN, SYSTEM LINK, XBOX LIVE**
EXTRAS **DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT** | WEBSITE **WWW.UBISOFT.COM**



■ Sniping is quite satisfying, especially when the victim tumbles over a ledge upon death.



■ Awesome flashback scenes advance the plot.

■ The storyboard death sequences pop up after a particularly spectacular or gory kill.

XIII's style is like asparagus. You either love it or you don't. In this French comic book turned first-person shooter, you step into the dazed and confused shoes of special agent XIII, slowly sifting through your old memories and a lot of conspiracy to eventually re-discover your identity through a series of brilliantly done comic-book-style cutscenes.

The developers certainly subscribe to the "go big or go home" philosophy. *XIII* isn't cel-shaded for the heck of it – everything screams "comic book." Storyboard-style cutscenes advance the plot, visible text accompanies weapon effects and enemy screams, and hard ink outlines around everyone all help pull you into the world. Never before has a videogame so successfully tapped into the essence of a comic book.

Thankfully, there's an excellent game underneath it all, too. The weapon variety is nice, with gadgets such as a hookshot and lockpick thrown in for good measure. The action mixes nicely between balls-to-the-wall action and sneaky stealth play. And even the stealthy bits let you attack by smashing chairs and brooms over people's heads, which is better than simply hiding. You can even cart bodies out of sight, a la *Splinter Cell*. Unfortunately, some boring level design, occasional overly alert AI, and a nasty final boss battle mar the experience a bit, and the game is a bit on the short side at around 12-15 hours.

There is multiplayer to round out the package, however. Four game types and Live support make for good but not groundbreaking fun.

In the end, *XIII* is an excellent game that earns bonus points for doing something new, but it ultimately falls just a splinter short of greatness.

– Ryan McCaffrey

THE VERDICT

Graphics
Seeing a comic book in motion warms our hearts. *XIII* looks great, right down to the ink panel menus.

Immersion
If you dig comic books, you'll be completely sucked in. Each new comic-book-inspired touch you encounter is guaranteed to bring a smile to your face.

Sound
Solid if unspectacular sound work is lifted by excellent voice acting from leads David Duchovny and Adam West. Plus, the music score is perfect for this game.

Design
Too many bland, dull levels get in the way of the cool stuff you'll be doing, like jumping in and out of helicopters and bashing unsuspecting bad guys with chairs.

(+) Good, (–) Bad, (?) Perplexing
+ Incredibly cool presentation
+ Good mission variety
+ Full multiplayer support
– Inconsistent level design
– Iffy AI
– Too short
? Would you really scream "NOOO!" if shot? Wouldn't you yell "OWWW!"?

Official Xbox Magazine verdict **8.8** 10.0

■ **CEL-SHADEY:** Don't be fooled by *XIII*'s look. The game is loaded with gruesome violence (including one character's on-screen suicide) and profanity. Don't say we didn't warn you, parents.



The Sims are finally coming out to play

The Sims Bustin' Out

DEVELOPER **MAXIS** | PUBLISHER **EA** | MULTIPLAYER **2-PLAYER DIAGONAL SPLIT SCREEN**
WEBSITE **THESIMS.EA.COM** | EXTRAS **HDTV SUPPORT**

Building upon the level-based aspect of last year's console original, *Bustin' Out* features the ability to visit other locales. This is huge. This means you're not stuck trying to finish all the goals in a level before you can move on. Just hop in your vehicle to visit or move to one of the locations you've unlocked.

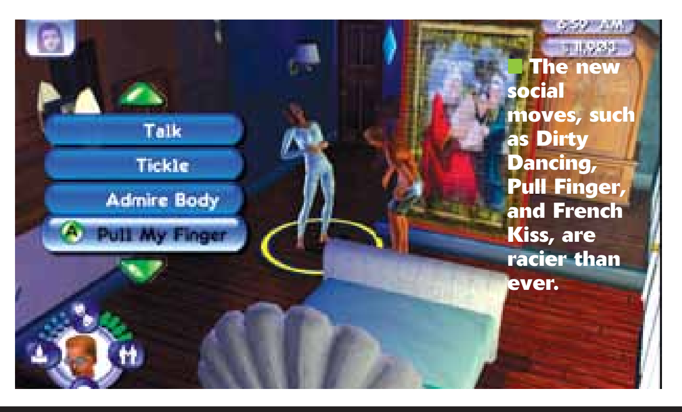
Like the first game, each level has certain goals, but completing just the career goals allows you to move to the next location. There are seven careers, including Jock, Mad Scientist, and Movie Star. Depending on which one you select, you ascend through unique paths. That means that once you win in one life, you can start over in another career to experience a different path.

You can also switch careers mid-game. So if you get up to level 8 of, say, Fashion Victim, you can bail and start over as a Gangster – all while retaining the skills and friends you've already earned, as well as your level 8 Fashion Victim status. The ability to start at the bottom rung is a nice break – because just like real life, trying to manage friends, career, and bodily functions late in the game can be frustrating.

Kudos to Maxis for fixing some of the annoyances of the original. You can now set the fast-forward button (R) to toggle between speeds, as opposed to enduring finger cramps from holding it down (though, it's still slow). Also, you can move the camera closer, which allows you to better see the improved graphics.

Sims fans, get ready to kiss the next month of your life good-bye.

— Cathy Lu



The new social moves, such as Dirty Dancing, Pull Finger, and French Kiss, are racier than ever.



The proof is in the feces

Dinosaur Hunting

DEVELOPER **SCARAB** | PUBLISHER **METRO3D** | MULTIPLAYER **NONE**
WEBSITE **WWW.METRO3D.COM** | EXTRAS **XBOX EXCLUSIVE**

Who would've thought that hunting dinos in a videogame could be charming? While not perfect, the concept and plain likeability of *Dinosaur Hunting* make it a dream. You are Malone Stein, a dinosaur hunter circa 1910 who must travel to the Amazon in order to help capture dinos that have survived the prehistoric era.

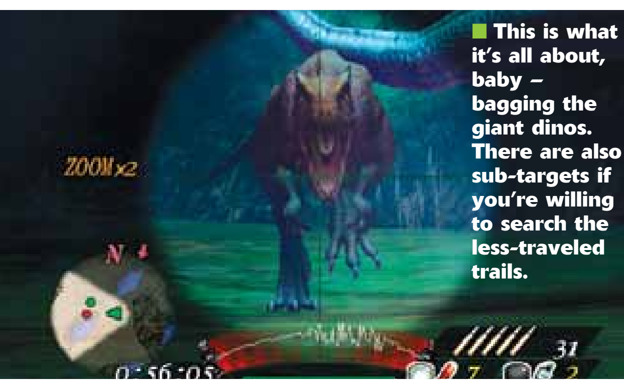
Hunting is handled loosely, which is great. It's primarily a hide-and-go-shoot game starring people dressed like they're trying out for *Final Fantasy XII*. See some dinos, and blast them – with tranquilizer guns, of course.

By exploring the environment, and yes, sifting through their feces, you'll get chemical formulas for taking out specific dinos – one of the coolest features. Shoot a grazing Amargasaurus and you'll barely make a dent in its hide. But figure out its chemical makeup, and you can make a custom tranq bullet for it.

The strategy and multi-path level design of the game are compelling, but unfortunately, the game's far from polished. Dinos will run through objects in the environment, your character is tough to control, bull's-eye shots miss for no reason, and the lock-on function causes some problems.

What *DH* *does* deliver is a charming fantasy of chasing the biggest game our world has ever known.

– Vincent Lopez



This is what it's all about, baby – bagging the giant dinos. There are also sub-targets if you're willing to search the less-traveled trails.



FOSSIL FACTOID: We still have a few prehistoric animals alive and well on our planet – sharks, crocodiles, and Dick Clark are just a few examples.

This one goes out to all our buddies in the recovery ward

Backyard Wrestling

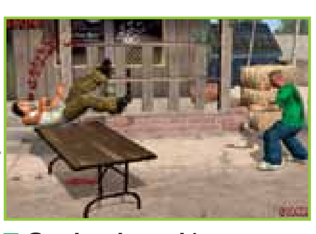
DEVELOPER **PARADOX** | PUBLISHER **EIDOS**
MULTIPLAYER **2** | WEBSITE **WWW.BYWGAME.COM**



Backyard Wrestling: Don't Try This At Home (Unless You Send a Videotape and Release Form – Wink, Wink) ditches underprivileged youth for a forgettable assemblage of bargain basement indy wrestlers, talentless rockers, and blandly rendered strippers.

BYW is body-slammed by slip-shod control, uninspired story-telling, and AI that flips between hyper-brutality and empty-headed idiocy. Also, the fighting engine is often unforgivably cheap. Sure, there are some clever special moves and cool interactivity, but the core gameplay is flawed. The wrestler models and environments are sub-par as well. Plus, rampant clipping errors and animation glitches strongly hint that the game's not actually finished. Fighting fans will be frustrated, wrestling fans will be bored, and fans of the basic human condition will send a letter to an editor. We'll probably just take a shower.

– Dan Egger



Go ahead, try this one at home... it'll be okay.



How about another go, eh?

NHL Rivals 2004

The textures and reflections are amazing.

DEVELOPER **MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS** | PUBLISHER **MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS**
MULTIPLAYER **1-4 VIA XBOX LIVE** | WEBSITE **WWW.XBOX.COM** | EXTRAS **XSN SPORTS, DOLBY 5.1**

In its rookie season, *NHL Rivals* comes out of the box strong but quickly gets blindsided by a hip-check at center ice. Amazing detail and lush graphics just aren't enough to propel *Rivals* atop this competitive season of hockey titles.

The biggest fault in *Rivals* is the A.I. – your teammates seem terminally lost, neglecting to chase loose pucks or go after rebounds. And worst of all, the goalie *always* covers the puck, which completely kills the momentum of the game. The control isn't much better, causing uncalled-for amounts of frustration. The players feel heavy and are not very agile at all. *Rivals*' strongest feature is its XSN Sports functionality, which will allow you to compete online in tournaments and leagues.

Microsoft is headed in the right direction with *Rivals*, but their first shot hits the crossbar.

– Chris Thompson





Crash has a need for speed

Crash Nitro Kart

Simply great four-player fun.

DEVELOPER **VICARIOUS VISIONS** | PUBLISHER **VIVENDI UNIVERSAL** | MULTIPLAYER **4 PLAYERS**
WEBSITE **WWW.VUGAMES.COM** | EXTRAS **UNLOCKABLE EXTRAS**

Nintendo's *Mario Kart* will never be on Xbox, but that doesn't mean we can't have a solid kart racer.

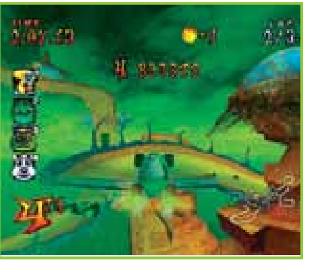
All of the typical features are present here – wacky weapons, oversized racers, and fully 3D worlds – but what really makes *Crash Nitro Kart* worth playing is the solid control and innovative boost system.

Taking a spin around the game in the normal difficulty is doable without any special skills. But once you bump the difficulty up to hard, a whole new side of the game shines through.

The game allows you to fire off a nitrous blast every time you execute a powerslide. By chaining a number of controlled slides together, you can race an entire track with a continuous boost.

An engaging multiplayer mode, featuring a number of solid deathmatch style games rounds out the package.

– Adam Pavlacka





LEGAL HILARITY: Read *BYW*'s "don't try this at home" legal warning. It tells kids that the people in the game are "trained professionals" moments before running videos of bloody hillbilly kids jumping off of roofs.

Dark, wet, and slippery

Need For Speed: Underground

DEVELOPER **EA** | PUBLISHER **EA** | WEBSITE **WWW.EA.COM**
MULTIPLAYER **1-2 SPLIT SCREEN** | EXTRAS **THX CERTIFIED SOUND, CHEESY WARNING**





The reflections on roads and vehicles are simply the shiniest we've ever seen. EA's polishing technology is beyond compare.

Remember to focus. Haha!

First things first: this may look like a street racing simulation, but *Need For Speed: Underground* is very much an arcade game, owing a lot more to prior *NFS* games than, say, *Gran Turismo*. In the end, that's what's going to set it apart from titles like *Sega GT Online* and, perhaps more importantly, *Project Gotham Racing 2*.

In *Need for Speed: Underground*, you slide into the driver's seat as an underground racing circuit newbie, working your way through the rankings and through ever-more powerful vehicles as you earn points for victory and style. You use these points to buy new rides and upgrade the parts of your existing vehicle.

That customization model is simply the most robust we've ever seen. Tons of paint jobs, colors, and decals are available for every car, but you can also change spoilers, bumpers, ground effects – even add neon underlighting for that Miami look. And it's not just for show – the more tweaked and tuned your car is, the more style points you'll earn in races (circuit, drag races, and other challenges)... and a few points could be the difference between an embarrassing defeat and a new Nissan Skyline.

The realistic street racers (models from Ford, Mazda, Nissan, et al) are all licensed from the manufacturers, which goes some way toward explaining both the lack of car damage and the fact that the cars are rendered beautifully. In fact, aside from some minor framerate glitches, *NFS: Underground* is a graphical masterpiece, easily eclipsing the similar *Midnight Club II*. Cool depth of field and blurring effects create an almost insane sense of speed.

Handling is, as we mentioned before, very arcadey. It changes dramatically between cars, but drift is forgiving and controllable, so powersliding into corners is not only fun, it's an essential element that has to be mastered. And bad news for fans of auto-shifting: without using "stick," some of the later drag races are nearly impossible.

The game's only real failing is in its comparative lack of variety. While there are plenty of race modes and tuning to work through, the nighttime racing and lack of track variety can feel a little redundant after a while.

– Frank O'Connor

THE VERDICT

Graphics
Stunning lighting and textures, cool depth of field effects.

Immersion
The street racing atmosphere captured well, with some PG-rated dumbing down.

Sound
Great tunes, well-implemented engine effects.

Design
Tons of modes, cool garage section and a nice interface.

(+) Good.
(–) Bad.
(?) Perplexing

+ Fast and, yes, furious action
+ Subtle and dramatic car tweaks
+ Bangin' choons on soundtrack
– Occasional framerate drops
– PS2 poly counts
? Where is my Mazdaspeed Protégé? Where!?



CELICA FREAKER: Although Toyota's "Celica" is a made-up word inferring speed, the real word "celiac" means, "Of or relating to the abdomen or abdominal cavity."

Review Roundup

And the games just keep coming… If you think that adding 26 new reviews is crazy, just wait until next issue!

Game/Publisher	Score
2002 FIFA World Cup EA	8.3
4X4 EVO 2 Take Two	5.5
Aggressive Inline Acclaim	9.1
AirForce Delta Storm Konami	7.1
Aliens vs. Predator: Extinction EA	6.0
All-Star Baseball 2004 Acclaim	7.7
Alter Echo THQ	7.5
Amped: Freestyle Snowboarding Microsoft	8.4
Amped 2 Microsoft	8.7
Antz Extreme Racing Empire Interactive	3.2
Apex Atari	8.9
Aquaman TDK	4.1
Arctic Thunder Midway	5.9
Armed & Dangerous Lucas Arts	9.0
ATV Quad Power Racing 2 Acclaim	6.9
Azurik: Rise of Perathia Microsoft	3.7
Backyard Wrestling Eidos	5.0
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance Vivendi	8.8
Barbarian Titus	7.0
Batman: Dark Tomorrow Kemco	3.5
Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu Ubisoft	6.1
Batman Vengeance Ubisoft	4.6
Battle Engine Aquila Infogrames	8.3
Beyond Good & Evil Ubisoft	9.0
Big Mutha Truckers Empire	7.4
Black Stone Xicat	5.6
Blade II Activision	6.0
Blinx: The Time Sweeper Microsoft	7.4
Blood Wake Microsoft	7.4
BloodRayne Majesco	6.8
Bloody Roar Extreme Konami	8.3
BMX XXX Acclaim	7.4
Bruce Lee: Quest of the Dragon Universal	3.0
Brute Force Microsoft	8.0
Buffy the Vampire Slayer EA	9.0
Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds Vivendi Universal	8.8
Burnout Acclaim	8.0
Burnout 2: Point of Impact-Dv. Cut Acclaim	9.0
Cabela's Deer Hunt 2004 Season Activision	8.1
Capcom vs. SNK 2: EO Capcom	8.0
Cel Damage EA	6.8
Chase Bam	4.1
Circus Maximus Encore	6.4
Colin McRae Rally 3 Codemasters	8.8
Commandos 2 Eidos	7.2
Conflict: Desert Storm Gotham Games	6.6
Conflict Desert Storm II: Back to Baghdad Gotham Games	7.0
Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex Universal	7.1
Crash Nitro Kart VUGames	8.3
Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller Sega	8.0
Crimson Sea Koei	8.5
Crimson Skies: High Road to Revenge Microsoft	9.2
Dark Angel Sierra	4.5
Dark Summit THQ	7.0
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2 Acclaim	8.7
David Beckham Soccer Majesco	4.2
Dead Man's Hand Atari	5.0
Dead or Alive 3 Tecmo	9.5
Dead to Rights Namco	8.5
Deathrow Ubisoft	7.4
Defender Midway	8.0
Deus Ex: Invisible War Eidos	9.1
Dino Crisis 3 Capcom	6.5
Dinosaur Hunting Metro3D	8.1
Disney's Extreme Skate Adventure Activision	8.5
DOA Xtreme Beach Volleyball Tecmo	8.4
Dr. Muto Midway	7.3
Dragon's Lair 3D Ubisoft	8.1
Dronez Metro3D	5.2
Dungeon & Dragons Heroes Atari	9.0
Dynasty Warriors 3 Koei	7.0
Dynasty Warriors 4 Koei	8.5
Eggmania: Eggstreme Madness Kemco	7.8
Enclave Vivendi Universal	7.4
ESPN College Hoops Sega	8.8
ESPN MLS ExtraTime 2002 Konami	8.6
ESPN NBA 2Night 2002 Konami	4.2
ESPN NBA Basketball Sega	9.0
ESPN NFL Football Sega	9.3
ESPN NFL Primetime 2002 Konami	7.1
ESPN NHL Hockey Sega	8.9
ESPN Int'l Winter Sports 2002 Konami	5.9
ESPN X Games Snowboarding 2002 Konami	7.9
Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick THQ	5.3
F1 2001 EA	8.7
Fatal Frame Tecmo	8.8
FIFA Soccer 2003 EA	8.8
FIFA Soccer 2004 EA	9.1
Finding Nemo THQ	4.4
Freaky Flyers Midway	7.9
Freedom Fighters EA	8.5
Freestyle Metal X Midway	6.5
Furious Karting Infogrames	6.9
Futurama Vivendi Universal	5.0
Fuzion Frenzy Microsoft	7.8
Gauntlet Dark Legacy Midway	6.2
Genma Onimusha Capcom	7.9
Gladiator Acclaim	6.9
Gladius LucasArts	8.5
Grabbed by the Ghoulies Microsoft	8.2
Grand Theft Auto Double Pack Rockstar	9.1
Group S Challenge Capcom	7.8
Gun Metal Majesco	7.9
Gunvalkyrie Sega	8.2
Halo Microsoft	9.5
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets EA	7.5
Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup EA	7.9
High Heat Baseball 2004 3DO	8.2
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin Eidos	8.9
House of the Dead III Sega	6.9

Game/Publisher	Score
Hunter: The Reckoning Interplay	8.9
Hunter: The Reckoning – Redeemer Vivendi Universal	7.4
Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb LucasArts	9.0
IndyCar Series Codemasters	8.1
Inside Pitch 2003 Microsoft	7.2
The Italian Job Eidos	7.8
James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire EA	7.9
James Bond 007: Nightfire EA	8.4
Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast LucasArts	9.0
Jedi Knight III: Jedi Academy Lucas Arts	7.0
JSRF: Jet Set Radio Future Sega	9.2
Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis Vivendi	6.0
Kabuki Warriors Crave	5.9
Kakuto Chojin Microsoft	6.2
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer Activision	6.9
kill.switch Namco	7.8
Knockout Kings 2002 EA	8.0
Kung Fu Chaos Microsoft	6.9
Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2 Eidos	8.5
Links 2004 Microsoft	9.1
LOTR: Fellowship of the Ring Black Label Games	7.0
LOTR: The Two Towers EA	8.0
Loons: The Fight for Fame Infogrames	7.3
Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter Vivendi	7.8
Mad Dash Racing Eidos	7.3
Madden 2003 EA	8.8
Madden NFL 2004 EA	8.9
Magic the Gathering: Battlegrounds Atari	8.3
Marvel vs. Capcom 2 Capcom	7.8
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2 Activision	8.4
Max Payne Rockstar	8.8
MechAssault Microsoft	9.3
Medal of Honor: Frontline EA	9.0
Medal of Honor: Rising Sun EA	8.8
Metal Arms: Glitch in the System Vivendi Universal	9.0
Metal Dungeon Xicat	6.1
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance Konami	9.0
Midnight Club II Rockstar	9.3
Midtown Madness 3 Microsoft	8.9
Midway Arcade Treasures Midway	8.5
Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing Codemasters	5.5
Minority Report Activision	7.2
MLB Slugfest 20-03 Midway	8.6
MLB Slugfest 20-04 Midway	8.4
Monopoly Party Infogrames	3.2
Morrowind Bethesda	8.1
Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance Midway	8.9
MotoGP THQ	7.9
MotoGP 2 THQ	8.5
Motor Trend Presents Lotus Challenge Xicat Interactive	7.3
Murakumo: Renegade Mech Pursuit Ubisoft	5.9
MVP Baseball 2003 EA	8.4
MX 2002 Featuring Ricky Carmichael THQ	6.5
MX Superfly THQ	7.4
Myst III: Exile Ubisoft	5.9
Namco Museum Namco	6.4
NASCAR Heat Infogrames	8.2
NASCAR Thunder 2003 EA	8.0
NBA 2K3 Sega	8.7
NBA Inside Drive 2003 Microsoft	7.9
NBA Inside Drive 2004 Microsoft	7.9
NBA Jam Acclaim	6.5
NBA Live 2003 EA	8.8
NBA Live 2004 EA	9.1
NBA Starting Five Konami	6.0
NBA Street Vol. 2 EA	8.9
NCAA College Football 2K3 Sega	7.1
NCAA College Basketball 2K3 Sega	8.5
NCAA Football 2003 EA	8.8
NCAA March Madness 2004 EA	8.9
Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2 EA	7.9
Need for Speed Underground EA	8.6
New Legends THQ	4.0
NFL 2K3 Sega	9.1
NFL Blitz 20-03 Midway	6.5
NFL Fever 2004 Microsoft	7.9
NHL 2003 EA	7.9
NHL 2004 EA	8.6
NHL 2K3 Sega	8.9
NHL Hitz 20-03 Midway	8.8
NHL Rivals 2004 Microsoft	7.0
Nightcaster: Defeat the Darkness Microsoft	4.9
Nightcaster II: Equinox Jaleco	7.9
Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee Microsoft	9.0
Otogi: Myth of Demons Sega	9.0
Outlaw Golf S&S Interactive	7.9
Outlaw Volleyball S&S Interactive	8.0
PacMan World 2 Namco	7.2
Panzer Dragoon Orta Sega	9.3
Phantasy Star Online Ep. I & II Microsoft	8.9
Phantom Crash Phantagram	7.4
Pirates of the Caribbean Bethesda	7.0
Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat EA	7.1
Prisoner of War Codemasters	5.9
Pro Cast Sports Fishing Game Capcom	6.9
Pro Race Driver Codemasters	8.0
Project Gotham Racing Microsoft	9.0
Project Gotham Racing 2 Microsoft	9.4
Pulse Racer Jaleco	1.0
Quantum Redshift Microsoft	9.0
RalliSport Challenge Microsoft	8.6
Rally Fusion: Race Of Champions Activision	7.0
Rayman Arena Ubisoft	7.2
Rayman 3 Hoodlum Havoc Ubisoft	8.6
Red Card 20-03 Midway	6.5
Red Faction II THQ	8.3
Reign of Fire Bam	6.1
Return to Castle Wolfenstein: Tides of War Activision	9.2
Roadkill Midway	8.6
Robin Hood: Defender of the Crown Capcom	5.7

Game/Publisher	Score
Robotech: Battlecry TDK Mediactive	8.6
Rocky Ubisoft	7.3
Rogue Ops Kemco	8.5
Roller Coaster Tycoon Infogrames	6.5
Run Like Hell Interplay	6.5
Scooby Doo: Night of 1000 Frights THQ	7.7
Seablade S&S Interactive	4.5
Sega GT 2002 Sega	9.1
Sega GT Online Sega	8.7
Serious Sam Gotham Games	7.5
Shenmue II Microsoft	7.6
Shrek TDK	5.3
Shrek Super Party TDK	3.9
Silent Hill 2: Restless Dreams Konami	8.9
Smashing Drive Namco	5.0
Sneakers Microsoft	4.9
Soccer Slam Sega	7.9
Soldier of Fortune II: Double Helix Activision	8.5
Soul Calibur II Namco	9.2
Speed Kings Acclaim	5.8
Spider-Man Activision	7.9
Splashdown Infogrames	8.6
SpyHunter Midway	8.1
SSX Tricky EA	8.7
SSX 3 EA Big	9.1
Star Trek: Shattered Universe TDK Mediactive	6.5
Star Wars: Jedi Starfighter LucasArts	8.1
Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic LucasArts	9.4
Star Wars Obi-Wan LucasArts	7.0
Star Wars Starfighter SE LucasArts	7.0
Star Wars: The Clone Wars LucasArts	7.8
Starsky & Hutch Empire	7.6
State of Emergency Rockstar	6.5
Steel Battalion Capcom	8.9
Street Hoops Activision	6.9
Super Bubble Pop Jaleco	7.4
Superman: The Man of Steel Infogrames	5.8
SWAT: Global Strike Team Vivendi Universal	7.7
SX Superstar Acclaim	3.7
Syberia XS Games	8.0
Tao Feng: Fist of the Lotus Microsoft	7.4
Taz: Wanted Infogrames	5.6
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Konami	5.0
Test Drive Infogrames	7.2
Test Drive Off-Road: Wide Open Infogrames	5.6
Tetris Worlds THQ	6.8
The Great Escape Gotham Games	5.5
The Haunted Mansion TDK	8.3
The Hulk Universal	7.9
The Simpsons Hit & Run Vivendi Universal	8.8
The Simpsons Road Rage EA	6.2
The Sims EA	8.5
The Sims Bustin' Out EA	8.9
The Thing Black Label Games	8.0
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003 EA	9.2
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004 EA	9.0
TimeSplitters 2 Eidos	9.0
ToeJam & Earl III: Mission to Earth Sega	8.2
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Ubisoft	9.0
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Island Thunder Ubisoft	9.0
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3 Ubisoft	9.2
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Ubisoft	9.6
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2x Activision	8.8
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 Activision	9.0
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 Activision	9.0
Top Spin Microsoft	9.0
Total Immersion Racing Empire	3.5
Totaled! Majesco	7.1
Toxic Grind THQ	7.5
TransWorld Snowboarding Infogrames	8.3
TransWorld Surf Infogrames	8.2
Turok: Evolution Acclaim	7.6
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger EA	6.9
UFC Tapout Crave	9.0
UFC Tapout 2 TDK Mediactive	8.0
Unreal Championship Infogrames	8.0
V-Rally 3 Infogrames	8.0
Vexx Acclaim	7.9
Voodoo Vince Microsoft	8.8
Wakeboarding Unleashed (Shaun Murray) Activision	9.0
Wallace and Gromit in Project Zoo BAM	7.5
Whacked! Microsoft	7.4
Whiteout Konami	5.7
World Racing TDK	7.4
World Series Baseball 2K3 Sega	8.8
WWE Raw 2 THQ	6.8
WWF Raw THQ	5.7
Wreckless Activision	9.1
XIII Ubisoft	8.8
X-2 Wolverine's Revenge Activision	5.9
X-Men: Next Dimension Activision	7.3
XGRA Acclaim	7.8
Zapper Infogrames	6.0

Cel-ebration

Like your games to be cel-shaded? Then check it out.

Cel Damage EA	6.8
Dragon's Lair 3D Ubisoft	8.1
Futurama VUGames	5.0
JSRF – Jet Set Radio Future Sega	9.2
Loons: The Fight for Fame Infogrames	7.3
Robotech: Battlecry TDK	8.6
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Konami	5.0
The Simpsons Road Rage EA	6.2
The Simpsons Hit & Run VUGames	8.8
XIII Ubisoft	8.8

GREETINGS TO THE NEW BRUNETTE: We have a new staff member this month in the form of Chris Thompson, who wrote the reviews for *NHL Rivals* and *MOH: Rising Sun*!

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Dungeons & Dragons Heroes

SOUL SHARDS GUIDE

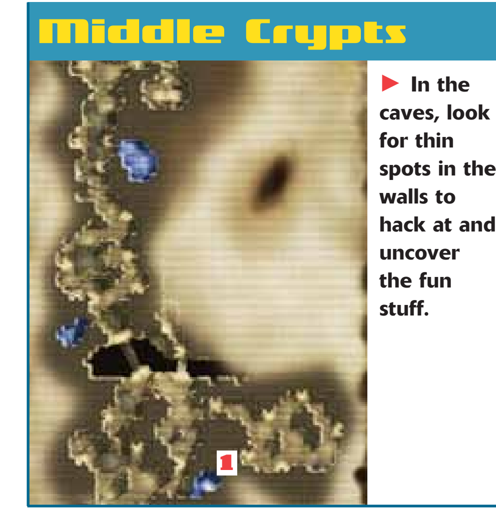
Your default Ancestral Weapon can also become your most powerful in *Dungeons & Dragons Heroes*. For every five of the hidden Soul Shards you find, the Ancestral powers up one level. Track down all 20, and you've got a certifiable death-dealer on your hands. We've enlisted the help of Atari, and because they love you, they've coughed up the locations of all 20. Dig it.



1: Middle Crypts (1) (location shown on map)
2: Lower Crypts (1) (location shown on map)
3: Swamp (1)
4: Castle Baele: Treasury (1)
5: Castle Baele: Church of Pelor (1)
6: Castle Baele: Dungeon (1) (location shown on map)
7: Yuan Ti: Wilds (1) (location shown on map)
8: The Portals (1)
9: Yuan Ti: Kings Fort (1)
10: Yuan Ti: Tree Towers (1)
11: Metal Works: Smelters (1)
12: Metal Works: Cooling Room (1) (location shown on map)
13: Metal Works: Die Cast (1)
14: Frostbound: Ice Fields (1)
15: Frostbound: Barbarian Fort (1)
16: Bone Necropolis: Upper Graveyard (1)
17: Bone Necropolis: Bone Temple (1)
18: Bone Necropolis: Bone Bridge (1)
19: Shadow Keep (1)
20: Shadow Keep: East Grand Hall (1)

Here are a few 2D overlays of the lands to help guide you. The highlighted areas show the locations of the secret areas, which can include gold, goodies, or those precious Soul Shards.

Middle Crypts



▶ In the caves, look for thin spots in the walls to hack at and uncover the fun stuff.

Lower Crypts

▶ As you can see, there are plenty of hidden spots to be discovered early in the game.

■ **MUTUAL BENEFIT:** Everyone we've talked to, including ourselves, was only able to find 18 Soul Shards in *Heroes*. So this strategy guide is as much for us as it is for you.

DIRTY CHEATS

Dungeons & Dragons Heroes

To enter the codes, in game press Y, A, and left trigger simultaneously. An "enter code" screen will appear.

CODE	Action
MPS LABS	Unlock Nightmare
YASMIN G	Green Orb #2 Purple Orb Green Orb #3
P BASS	Skeleton Key
SNODGRAS	Skeleton Key
KEIDEL	Skeleton Key
ELSON	Thunderstone
ESKO	Flash Freeze
BILGER	Tome of Apprentice
AUSTIN	Rod of Destruction
JARMAN	Rod of Miracles
DELUCIA	Rod of Fire
UHL	Potion of Haste
THOMAS	Berserk Brew
SHAZAM	Acid Flask
EHOFF	Fiery Oil
BROPHY	Fire Flask
CRAWLEY	Holy Water Potion
DESIRO	Insect Plague
LU	Will Potion Medium
GEE	Will Potion Large
THOMPSON	Healing Potion Large
WEBER	Fire Bomb
BELL	Thrown Dagger of Bewilderment
DINOLT	Rod of Shadows
PRASAD	Thrown Halcyon Hammer
WHITTAKE	Rod of Reflection
MILLER	Green Orb #1
PAQUIN	Tome of Lessons
MEFFORD	Tome of Teacher
SPANBURG	Tome of the Master
MOREL	Thrown Dagger
BRATHWAI	Thrown Hammer
FRAZIER	Thrown Viper Axe
COMMANDR	Thrown Viper Axe
HOWARD	Thrown Viper Axe
SMITH	Pyrokins
ROMANO	Thrown Axe of Ruin
WRIGHT	Globe Potion
HOPPENST	Warp Stone
JAURENGUI	Buff Intelligence
N STINE	Buff Constitution
CALLAHAN	Buff Strength
LAURENO	Buff Wisdom
DAWN	Buff Charisma
YAN	Buff Dexterity
ZXE053	Buff Dexterity
GIMME XP	10,000 XP
IDD QD	Invulnerable
RIKSTORE	Give $500,000
IDKFA	Unlimited MW
UNBUFF	Turn off Unlimited MW Invulnerable

NBA Live 2004

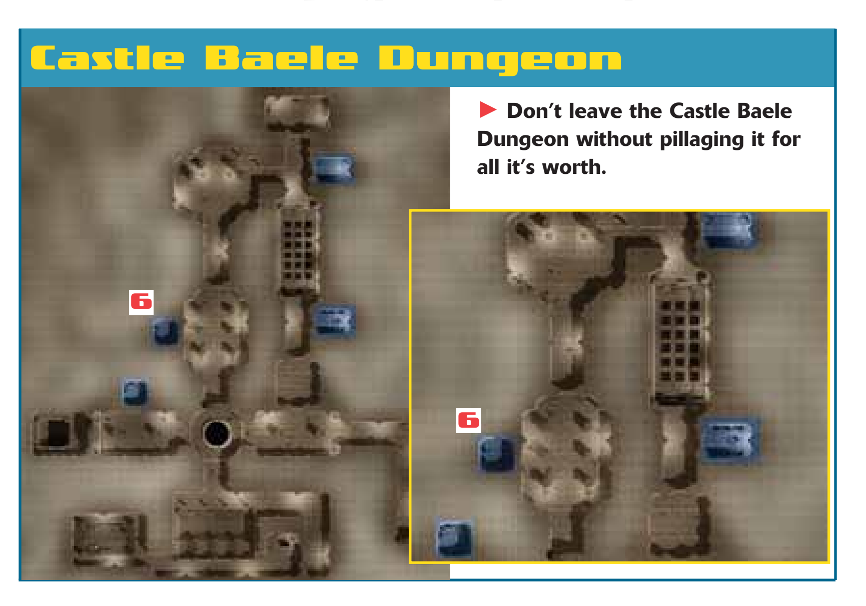
It's Gotta be the Shoes

Enter these to unlock the following shoes.

Shoes	Cheat
Air Foamposite Pro Colorway 1	DG56TRF446
Air Foamposite Pro Colorway 2	3245AFSD45
Air Foamposite Pro Colorway 3	DSAKF38422
Air Hyperflight Colorway 3	A0K374HF8S
Air Hyperflight Colorway 4	JCX93LSS88
Air Zoom Flight Colorway 1	367UEY6SN
Air Flightposite II Colorway 2	2389JASE3E
Air Flight 89 Colorway 3	GF9845JHR4

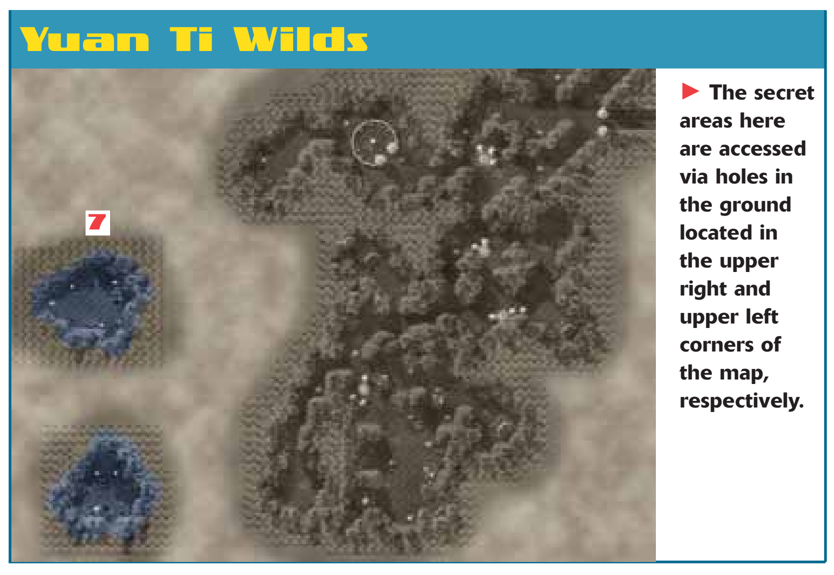
D & D HEROES: SOUL SHARDS GUIDE CONTINUED

Castle Baele Dungeon



▶ Don't leave the Castle Baele Dungeon without pillaging it for all it's worth.

Yuan Ti Wilds



▶ The secret areas here are accessed via holes in the ground located in the upper right and upper left corners of the map, respectively.

Metal Works: Cooling Room



▶ Large fans will be the objects you'll need to knock out here in order to get to the stashed booty.

■ **GO BACK:** If you get through an area in *Heroes* and don't find the Soul Shard, the game kindly allows you to go back to any level to search again.

DISC AND CHALLENGES

Sometimes our disc shows its value with pure quantity (like last month's 10 demos), but this month it's riding on pure quality. With sweet (and deep) demos for gems like *Project Gotham Racing 2* and *Crimson Skies* you'll have plenty of playing to do. Oh, and for those that didn't crack last month's hidden video Easter egg code, here it is: hold down the left trigger at the main disc menu and press Y, A, B, B, A, down, A, B, B, A, down, up. And feel the rumble!



PLAYABLE DEMOS

CHALLENGE

Project Gotham Racing 2

MICROSOFT

THE SKINNY: A collection of cars that would make Jay Leno jealous, tons o' tracks, and more gameplay than you can swing a rusty muffler at. Read the review on pg. 82 and then play it for yourself.
DEMO TIP: Keep sliding back and forth to keep your combo going.
CHALLENGE: Earn a platinum score on the Cone Challenge, Street Race, and Timed Run.
CHALLENGE POINTS: 5,000
PROOF: Snag a picture of the mode select/medals screen.

CHALLENGE

Dungeons & Dragons Heroes

ATARI

THE SKINNY: Think *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance* meets *Diablo* and you've got a decent idea. This is a great dungeon crawler that is, as the full version disc says, best played together.
DEMO TIP: You start with 60 skill points. Spend!
CHALLENGE: You start with four Soul Shards. Find the fifth. This shouldn't be hard, because we told you where they all are five pages ago.
CHALLENGE POINTS: 2,000
PROOF: Press the Back button to bring up your stats, then move over to the screen that shows how many Shards you have.

CHALLENGE

Crimson Skies: High Road to Revenge

MICROSOFT

THE SKINNY: Cars are for suckers in this alternate-reality U.S.A. Fly everywhere and do anything in this stunning dogfight combat title.
DEMO TIP: Look at that gorgeous water! Just look at it!
CHALLENGE: Top $5,000 in earnings. It's not tough – we just want you to play for a while to realize the greatness of this game.
CHALLENGE POINTS: 3,000
PROOF: Your earnings are shown at the top of the screen. Just snap a pic whenever you've topped $5K.

CHALLENGE

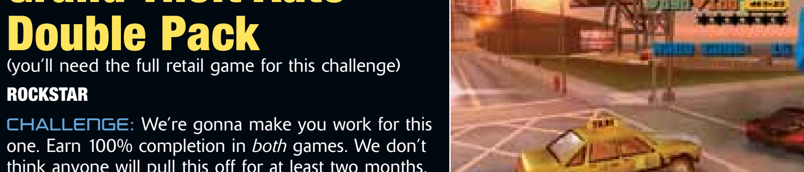
NHL Hitz Pro

MIDWAY

THE SKINNY: The awesome lightning-paced arcade hockey game is back and on fire. Take the Devils and Ducks out for a test skate and let the scoring begin.
DEMO TIP: Just keep shooting. That applies to any hockey game, but especially this one.
CHALLENGE: Score at least 10 goals with one player.
CHALLENGE POINTS: 3,000
PROOF: After you've done the deed, pause, head to the Stats Central and then Player Stats screen, and grab a picture.

CHALLENGE

Grand Theft Auto Double Pack



(you'll need the full retail game for this challenge)

ROCKSTAR

CHALLENGE: We're gonna make you work for this one. Earn 100% completion in *both* games. We don't think anyone will pull this off for at least two months.
CHALLENGE POINTS: 20,000
PROOF: Pause the game, go to your stats, and scroll to your completion percentage. Snap a picture.

WARNING! In the Video Previews section of this month's disc, the *Top Spin* video is incorrectly labeled as *Amped 2*. We apologize for the error.

NEED TO GET A DISC?

If you don't receive the disc then you need to upgrade! Each disc contains playable demos, video previews, downloads, and more. To get 12 issues that include the game disc with your subscription (prorated if necessary) for just $1 per issue, please call (515) 248-7682 and an operator will take care of everything. (Please note that subscriptions purchased through third-party subscription agents do not include the monthly game disc.)

IN THE QUEUE

Technical difficulties put the kibosh on our planned Xbox Live-enabled *Return to Castle Wolfenstein* demo. We're hoping to get it ironed out for next month. We're also working on landing demos for three other Editor's Choice winners. Stay tuned.

THE DISC AND CHALLENGE *SEASON THREE STANDINGS*

The season is young. Here are the early standings.

Kurt Horning	13,00
Lance Horlas	11,000
Jarrett Hamilton	11,000
Brandon Sherrer	9,000
Bjarni Asgeirsson	8,000
Holli Boison	8,000
Kurt Horning	8,000
Chris Reeves	7,000
Corey Greene	7,000
Stephan Andersen	7,000

TO SUBMIT CHALLENGES

Send an e-mail with a digital picture attached, including your first and last name and challenge completed, to xboxmag@futurenetworkusa.com with the subject line "I'm a Legend." You can also take pictures the old-fashioned way and mail them to us (don't forget your full name and challenge completed) at:

I'M A LEGEND
c/o Official Xbox Magazine
150 North Hill Dr.
Brisbane, CA 94005

P.S. Use the header "I'm a Legend" or your entry won't qualify.

DOWNLOAD CENTER

- ***The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers***
  Save file with every character fully leveled up, plus every extra unlocked.
- ***Sega GT 2002***
  Save file that makes you filthy rich and the owner of every car in the game.
- ***Blinx: The Time Sweeper***
  Save file granting you access to any level this platformer has to offer.
- ***Voodoo Vince***
  Start at the very last stage with every item. It's up to you to beat the last boss, though.
- ***Official Xbox Magazine Collection – Loop 4***
  Some original tunes you've heard on this disc, now downloadable for your custom soundtrack use!

SPECIAL FEATURES

- **Alien Quadrilogy**
  Take a sneak peek at the upcoming *Alien* DVD extravaganza.
- **LXG**
  Another DVD preview. This one gives you a trailer, a stills gallery, and even a deleted scene!

FEATURES

- **Broken Sword**
- **Kameo**
- **Ninja Gaiden**
- **Xbox Live**

VIDEO SHOWCASE

Miscellaneous footage from the following hot titles:

- ***Amped 2*** MICROSOFT
- ***Crimson Skies: High Road to Revenge*** MICROSOFT
- ***Deus Ex: Invisible War*** EIDOS
- ***Driver 3*** ATARI
- ***Jade Empire*** BIOWARE
- ***Links 2004*** MICROSOFT
- ***NBA Inside Drive*** MICROSOFT
- ***NHL Rivals 2004*** MICROSOFT
- ***NASCAR Thunder 2004*** EA SPORTS
- ***Project Gotham Racing 2*** MICROSOFT
- ***RalliSport Challenge 2*** MICROSOFT
- ***Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow*** UBISOFT
- ***Top Spin*** MICROSOFT
- ***Whiplash*** EIDOS

ONLINE RANKINGS: Want to see where you stand in our challenges on a daily basis? Our friends at teamxbox.com have got an all-new database up that gives you up-to-the-minute standings.

FEEDBACK: Are you enjoying getting exclusive previews of the hottest upcoming games? E-mail Disc Editor Dave Rees at drees@futurenetworkusa.com and say thanks.



It is the holiday issue and we thank you readers for giving us the best gift of all: a 38% reduction in letters asking when *Halo 2* is coming out. If you've got questions, comments, concerns, or gifts, send them via e-mail to xboxmag@futurenetworkusa.com. If you prefer the 37-cent stamp method, mail us at Official Xbox Magazine, c/o Future Network USA, 150 North Hill Dr., Brisbane, CA, 94005.

No credit? Bad credit?

I do not have a credit card. I don't like them and don't want one. This has been my main reason for not getting Xbox Live, as it requires a valid credit card. I've heard rumors that Microsoft is coming out with pre-paid cards that would eliminate the need for a credit card. Please tell me this is true!

Lee Meyrick

We say: *True and not true. Yes, Microsoft is coming out with a pre-paid subscription card for Xbox Live, but you still need a valid credit card to play on Live. They won't actually charge anything to the card, though.*

Line of Patience

I can't take it anymore! On one hand, the luscious *Steel Battalion* is going for $350+ on eBay. On the other hand, the extra-awesome *Line of Contact* is coming soon. Does the new expansion include the controller? Or should I start my bidding?

Danny Weaver Jr.

We say: *We're guessing you'll be able to buy the package (game and controller) or just the game. Definitely wait since* Line of Contact *will include the original and cost less.*

STP™ Speaks…

Dear Scout,
Please make those people you own give us some info on *Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne*. In return, I will give you… ONE BILLION KIBBLES!!!

Scout says: *Arf! The next game starring our favorite constipated anti-hero should be available as you read this (December 2, to be exact!). Who needs a trailer or demo when you can go buy the full game, right now? Now where are my Kibbles? Arf!*

Splinter Insanity

Some people collect stamps, others collect bottle caps, but this is what I collect (and no, those ain't blow-up dolls). What do you guys think?

Rob

We say: *Clearly, there are no corpses in the trunk of your real-life car. Clearly…*



No Living Forever on Xbox

The Xbox is the undisputed home of console first-person shooters. So why the heck haven't we seen any of the excellent *No One Lives Forever* games on our favorite system?

Brian Banning

We say: *The PC's hilarious spy spoof shooter series is one of the best-written franchises in gaming today, and would certainly make a worthy addition to the Xbox library. Unfortunately, when we contacted a Vivendi representative, they said, "Currently, there are no plans to bring* No One Lives Forever *to the Xbox platform." D'oh!*

FutureWho?

What ever happened to Future Guy? Please don't tell me he went too far and violated the laws of the space-time continuum, causing a rift that dooms him to an unending life of pain and suffering and no Xbox.

"Project X"

We say: *Last we heard, Future Guy was on vacation somewhere in the distant past. He was checking out prehistoric times so that he could be better at* BC *when it comes out, but a dinosaur may have eaten him. Ryan could jump into his DeLorean to go back and get him, but that requires effort. And gas. Have you seen gas prices lately?*

Fear that Figures

I recently received a package at my front doorstep and asked the wife if she had bought anything. She said no, and I couldn't help but wonder what might be in the box. Being a cautious person, I took the unmarked package outside to open it. I wasn't about to let it explode in my face, so I did what any good paranoid guy would do: I opened it from the bottom. Imagine my surprise when out of the bottom fell a set of *Halo* action figures I'd won from your contest! I survived and was rewarded!

Kenny Wiley
Greenville, TX

We say: ***Of course you survived. Halo doesn't kill, it only brings joy to those who believe in it. Like Santa Claus. Unless you've been bad, of course. Then Master Chief brings the pain.***



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■ **INVERTED ECONOMICS:** At first we thought *Steel Battalion* must be the only game ever to cost more than its console. Then we realized Neo Geo had those $300 2D fighting games. Egad!

Online and on time…

Sega GT Online

DEVELOPER **SEGA** | PUBLISHER **SEGA** | MULTIPLAYER **1-12**
WEBSITE **WWW.SEGA.COM** | EXTRAS **NEW CARS, NEW MODES**



■ **The inclusion of older American heavy metal rules.**

Weirdly, this is two different games strapped together – the original *Sega GT 2002* (it's actually called that in-game) and *Sega GT Online*. That means you get a sim-based racer, more like *Gran Turismo* than *Project Gotham*, with a remarkably involved online component. There are new cars of course, and some tweaked game modes too, but most of the new stuff is online.

Gathering Mode is a neat addition to the series, with three different event styles allowing you to compete for unlockable cars. In fact, it's the single fastest way in the game to win and drive extra vehicles, although hilariously, beating a time trial here in a tweaked RX7 might win you a Daihatsu Charade (initially).

The game really comes into its own of course in Online mode. As a matter of fact, selecting Online mode almost literally transports you to another game – a new interface and a surprisingly robust and navigable online selection screen. You can look for a quick race, host one yourself, or enter some stiff worldwide competition.

The game also supports downloadable content, and when we checked there were a number of cars, parts, and "goods" (random but interesting knick-knacks) to collect, including the new Mustang concept car. It's a solid racing game with excellent online functionality and it only costs $19.99… a rare bargain game that is worth every penny.

– Frank O'Connor

THE VERDICT

Graphics
Detailed, occasionally clever, and mostly attractive.

Immersion
Gearheads will love this, there's so much depth.

Sound
Excruciating title music, great sound effects.

Design
Sega GT Online is a masterpiece of design, but 2002 shows its age.

(+) Good.
(–) Bad.
(?) Perplexing
+ Great driving simulation
+ Tons of online challenge
+ A real bargain at $19.99
– Looks blurry in 480p mode
– Very methodically paced
? Still no Mazdaspeed Protégé? Come on!

